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THE Nation

AMERICA'S LEADING LIBERAL WEEKLY SINCE 1865

VOLUME 150 NEW YORK · SATURDAY · MARCH 16, 1940 NUMBER 11

The Shape of Things

ECONOMY WAS THROWN OUT THE WINDOW as the dictates of election year caused the Senate Appropriations Committee to add $297,000,000 to the Agriculture Department's appropriation bill. In addition to this sum, which was earmarked for parity payments and surplus commodity disposal, the committee voted to ask for a $100,000,000 RFC loan for the various farm agencies. If the action of the committee is ratified by the Senate, President Roosevelt's budget estimates will be exceeded by approximately $300,000,000. This completely obliterates the few million which have been saved by Congressional cuts and greatly accentuates the need for additional taxation as proposed in the President's budget message. Unfortunately there is no way under our representative government by which Congress can be forced to vote taxes to offset the expenditures which it authorizes with such alacrity. This makes it possible for Republicans to give benefits to voting farmers with one hand while beating the air for economy with the other. We trust that if the bill reaches the President in its present form he will have the courage to veto it.

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THE UNRECONSTRUCTED PUBLIC-UTILITY rebels are mustering their propaganda forces for a new fight against integration. Defeated in their efforts to kill the Public Utility Holding Company Act and foiled in their subsequent attempts to stall the application of the "death sentence" clause, they are now hoping to put pressure on the SEC to nullify it. During the past week the $1,200,000,000 Commonwealth and Southern Corporation was ordered to show cause why it should not adjust its structure to comply with Section 11 of the act. Wendell Willkie, president of the corporation, whose genius for publicity none can deny, immediately issued a long statement declaring that the break-up of the C. and S. system would result "in material losses to our consumers and great destruction of values to our security holders." He therefore urged that the SEC should use its "broad discretion" to "preserve these material values rather than to destroy them." Although he did not enter into specific proposals, his glowing description of the benefits of centralized ownership and management suggested a belief that the C. and S. set-up should be left substantially unchanged. The act, as Mr. Willkie pointed out, does permit the commission to allow the retention by a holding company of more than one integrated public-utility system under certain conditions, including their location in adjoining states. But C. and S. is composed of two distinct groups of properties, one in the Southeastern states and one centered in Michigan. If each of these groups were owned by a separate holding company, it would seem that the terms of the act would be met. But we do not see how the SEC's discretion could be stretched to allow the continuance of both under one umbrella.

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ATTACKS ON THE SEC SOONER OR LATER come to the accusation that it is interfering with private management or the sacred rights of the investor. Quite apart from the fact that public utilities are affected with a public interest and are the beneficiaries of extraordinary privileges granted by the public, the question arises of whose ox is gored. For the private interests represented by holding-company managements frequently differ from, and conflict with, the private interests of bondholders and senior security owners, who have supplied the bulk of the money on which utility empires are built. In this connection we should like to call the attention of our readers to the following comment in the March 2 issue of *Bond Outlook,* published by Standard Statistics Company, the leading financial-information service:

> The publicity given to the so-called "political persecution" of the utility industry has led to a general belief that the position of utility securities has been damaged by increased regulation. . . . Regulation under the Holding Company Act has strengthened materially the position of operating-company bonds, and added many safeguards thereto. . . . As an example, the SEC decision on the Consumers' Power case, in reality, was favorable to the company's bondholders, since it necessitated equity financing of future capacity expansion which would widen earnings and asset protection of the bonds.

Published weekly and copyright, 1940, in the U. S. A. by The Nation, Inc., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter, December 13, 1897, at the Post Office of New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1897.

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MAYOR LAGUARDIA'S LITTLE EXPERIMENT in "socialism" on New York City's transit lines may prove worse for labor than "capitalist" operation has been. The city, which already owns and operates one of the three rapid-transit systems in New York, is now about to take over the other two under a plan of "unification." Unification has been widely touted as a victory for public ownership, particularly in Wall Street circles ordinarily hostile to public ownership but glad of any chance to unload deteriorating transit securities on the city. For the people of New York the plan will mean loss of the five-cent fare; for workers on transit lines it may mean the loss of hard-won rights to collective bargaining. The Transport Workers' Union wrung recognition and contracts from the B. M. T. and the I. R. T. systems, though both had been notoriously anti-union in the past. Both lines will now be taken over by the city. The third rapid-transit system, the Independent, already operated by the city, has always refused to bargain collectively or to recognize the union, and at one time set up instead an employees'-representation plan. Mayor LaGuardia, though a friend of other people's labor, has resisted pressure to recognize the rights of his workers on the Independent, and has now publicly declared that under unification he would permit neither the right to strike nor the closed shop on the lines. His bold statement is strategically clever because it hides the main point at issue, which is not the right to strike or the closed shop but the right to bargain collectively.

*

TENNESSEE IS FAR FROM BEING THE ONLY place in the country where ignorance makes a monkey of education. Hill-billies from Morningside Heights, led by His Most Worshipful Eminence Bishop Manning, and bigots from the backwoods of Brooklyn, mobilized by the Hearst press, have raised a hue and cry against Bertrand Russell. In the world of education and enlightenment Mr. Russell is a distinguished philosopher, mathematician, and logician, but there must be several hundred thousand New Yorkers who now believe that he is a confirmed lecher, an advocate of adultery, and a believer in the nationalization of women. The storm arose when Mr. Russell was appointed professor of philosophy at City College. Bishop Manning at once seized on certain passages in "Education and the Good Life" to make it appear that Mr. Russell believed in education for a very wicked life. The campaign reached one of its high points when Monsignor Francis J. Walsh asked a gathering of Catholic policemen to join in the protest. They had had occasion to learn, he said, the full meaning of the "matrimonial triangle" by finding one corner of the triangle in a pool of blood. The Hearst press, scenting its favorite journalistic combination, sex and subversion, leaped to the fray. The Knights of Columbus girded on their armor. Behind the uproar is the fact that for the first time in years New York City has a liberal Board of Higher Education. We hope it will repudiate in no uncertain terms an attack which, if successful, would be a serious blow to academic freedom, not only in New York City but throughout the country.

*

IN PROPOSING THAT PART-TIME WORKERS be covered by unemployment insurance, a committee of the New York State Labor Department has sought to eliminate one of the primary weaknesses of New York's job-insurance system. As it has worked out so far, unemployment insurance has aided chiefly those among the unemployed who were in least need of assistance. Only persons who had been working more or less regularly at fair wages have been eligible for benefits; casual workers, employees in seasonal trades, and part-time workers have usually been ineligible. Moreover, the provision in the law barring benefits to anyone earning over $3 a week has discouraged the unemployed from seeking or accepting part-time jobs of any kind. Adoption of the committee's recommendation would provide partial benefits to any insured worker who is unemployed four or more days during a seven-day week. No account is taken, however, of part-time work which involves employment during only part of the working day. Some provision for this type of partial unemployment is obviously necessary if our state job-insurance laws are to fulfil the function for which they were designed.

*

FOR THE FUTURE HISTORIAN, AUGUST 23, 1939, the day on which the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed, may prove to be the most momentous date in the twentieth century. We therefore make no apologies to our readers for publishing yet another account of the events which culminated in this deal which shook the world. Frederick Kuh, whose article appears on page 360, is a foreign correspondent with long experience in both Germany and Britain. Unlike Louis Fischer, he believes that serious political negotiations between Moscow and Berlin did not begin until July, when Russian conversations with the Western powers seemed doomed to failure. He stresses, too, as an influence on the Soviet government's decision the many snubs received from London, including the ignoring by Lord Halifax of a direct invitation to visit Moscow personally. But the evidence he presents does not invalidate the theory previously put forward by Louis Fischer that the decisive factor drawing Germany and the U. S. S. R. together was the abandonment of appeasement by the Allies. So long as Hitler thought he could gain his eastern objectives without Allied interference, there was no inducement to him to pay a price for

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Soviet neutrality. It was only when he became convinced that to attack Poland meant war that he determined to woo Russia and so avoid the possibility of having to fight in east and west simultaneously. At the same time, the Russians, with fear of appeasement at their expense removed, saw a deal with Germany as safer and more likely to be profitable than a treaty with the Allies. It still remains to be seen whether by that decision the U. S. S. R. removed itself from participation in World War II or whether, as the end result of the pact, it will be dragged into the struggle against the West as a junior partner of Nazi Germany.

*

THE GRANTING OF A NEW $20,000,000 LOAN to China by the Export-Import Bank would be welcome news if it were not for the suspicion that it is being given as a sop for our failure to impose an embargo on Japan. With the Gallup poll showing 82 per cent of the population favoring an embargo, Congressmen dare not face their constituents in an election year without doing something for China. Passage of an embargo involved possible political reprisals from the scrap-iron, oil, and copper interests. But a loan to China offers the unique advantage of permitting American business men to trade with both sides. The fact that a continuation of our sales of war supplies to Japan threatens the very existence of China, and thereby endangers the loan, is apparently a minor consideration. As the money has been put up by the government, no private interest would be affected by such a development. Meanwhile, the $20,000,000 is enough to keep China going for several months even though it is far less than the $75,000,000 which China set as the amount needed. And if the loan were accompanied by an embargo instead of a continuation of direct economic aid to Japan, it would represent an important step in the defense of American rights and a setback for aggression. An articulate public opinion might still achieve this.

*

THE BAN ON THE SALE OF ARAB LAND TO Jews in important sections of Palestine was upheld in the House of Commons last week by a vote of 292 to 129, after the bitterest debate heard in that body since the outbreak of the war. Opposition to the plan has been widespread. Zionists attacked the restriction as a final betrayal of the Balfour Declaration. The powerful League of Nations Union opposed it as inconsistent with the terms of the mandate granted to Britain by the League of Nations. Laborites charged that the arrangement unduly favored the Arabs at the expense of the Jews, and was part of a barefaced maneuver to enlist Moslems throughout the world in support of the Allies. Most observers profess to see a link between the British policy in Palestine and that in India, where an effort is also being made to win Moslem aid. But despite the opposition—and despite a renewal of rioting in Palestine—the Chamberlain government has not wavered in its program. It is another example of the way ideals are apt to be smothered by war-time exigencies—in this instance, the necessity to offset intensive German and Italian propaganda in the strategically vital Arabian lands.

*

SPAIN HAS BEEN RETURNED TO ITS FORMER condition by Franco's decree restoring to the grandees all land seized by the republic for distribution among the peasants. The "owners" are to decide in each case whether the collectivist peasant organizations are to be allowed to continue to work the land at rentals approved by the government. Except in the north the greater part of the agricultural land in Spain was held by large landowners, and this fact was the chief cause of discontent in former years. The failure of the Republican government to enforce its expropriation decrees greatly weakened its prestige among the peasants prior to the outbreak of the Franco revolt in 1936. The present action has undoubtedly been delayed until now for fear of provoking new uprisings. Whether the Franco regime is now strongly enough intrenched to withstand the storm of opposition which is bound to arise remains to be seen. An observer who has recently returned from Spain reports that even before this action the whole country was seething with discontent—the middle classes no less than the working class. The prisons are still full, and arrests and executions are continuing. Unemployment is widespread. Food conditions are reported to be extremely bad, except for those who have the money to buy the more expensive, unrationed foods. Under such conditions Franco would seem to be tempting fate in taking the land from the peasants. But he apparently has obligations which he dare not repudiate.

Axis Over Finland

AS WE go to press, a Finnish delegation is in Moscow talking peace terms with Stalin and the ubiquitous Herr Ribbentrop is in Rome interviewing not only Ciano and Mussolini but the Pope. At first sight there may not seem to be any clear connection between these two events, yet it is not hard to see a possible link. From the Nazi point of view Italy's non-belligerent status is far from satisfactory, and it will become infinitely less so if the Allies succeed in forcing Rome to accept their blockade regulations. The Finnish war, however, has added to the barriers between Italy and Germany, for both the Fascist government press and the Vatican have loudly and frequently expressed disapproval of the Nazis' Russian comrades. If, therefore, peace could be patched up between Russia and Finland,

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a first step at least would have been taken toward bringing Italy back as an active partner in the anti-plutodemocracy front.

If this maneuver is to succeed, pacification of the Vatican is essential. Mussolini himself is realist enough to suffer no qualms about shaking hands with Moscow provided there is a profit in it. But he cannot ignore altogether the feelings of the Italian people. They retched unmistakably when asked to swallow the Nazis; and to expect them, devout Catholics for the most part, to embrace the godless Russians as well, is a little too much. Unless, therefore, Mussolini can get some kind of blessing from the church he is hardly likely to agree to a tightening of Italian bonds with Berlin and through Berlin with Moscow. This is what makes the request of von Ribbentrop for a papal interview so significant. He is reported to have told the Pope that the German understanding with Russia was purely economic and that the Third Reich still stood as a barrier against the bolshevization of Europe. Does he hope to clinch this argument by showing that as a result of German pressure Moscow has agreed to a negotiated peace with Finland?

Certainly it is remarkable that the Soviet government, forgetting that it had refused to recognize any Finnish government except that of Mr. Kuusinen, should have consented to talk terms with Mr. Risto Ryti and his colleagues. That in itself must prove damaging to its prestige and suggests that the war had proved unexpectedly costly, that Allied intervention was feared, or that Berlin had urged very strongly the desirability of an early peace. Probably all three of these factors played some part in launching the negotiations.

By the time this issue of *The Nation* appears, the outcome of the peace conference may be known. The difficulties of reaching agreement are obvious. The Soviet government cannot afford to offer terms more favorable to Finland than those rejected last fall. Yet the Finns, desperate as their position is, are not likely to accept proposals which would enable them to be digested in two bites à la Czechoslovakia. One of the numerous rumors afloat is that their integrity might be guaranteed by Scandinavia and Germany. This would be a very astute move on the part of the Reich, for it would thus be placed in a strong position to influence Scandinavia, which would be bound to lean on it for protection against Russia.

By the same token, peace between Russia and Finland under the aegis of Hitler would be an adverse development for the Allies. Moreover, it would release for German use Russian supplies and transport facilities now tied up by the Finnish war. Speaking in the House of Commons on Monday, Premier Chamberlain declared that Britain and France had offered to aid Finland "with all available resources" provided that a direct appeal for assistance was made. This declaration may help the Finns in their negotiations, although nothing was said about how the obstacles which hitherto have prevented the Allies from doing more than deliver material to Finland were to be overcome.

These obstacles are both diplomatic and strategic. Unless a landing could be effected at Petsamo—a very hazardous undertaking involving tremendous supply difficulties—the only route for troops is by way of Norway and Sweden. But these countries, more impressed by German power to hurt them than by Allied power to protect them, and anxious not to become the war's major battlefield, still refuse to permit passage to an Allied army. Possibly, if the Soviet demands are too harsh and the war continues, this refusal will be reconsidered, but the Allied command would then be faced with the problem of how to dispatch large enough forces across the North Sea, and how to move them quickly enough into southern Scandinavia to forestall a German invasion across the shorter and safer Baltic route. If a northern front is to be established at all, it cannot be treated as a minor "sideshow." Not tens but hundreds of thousands of men would be needed to overcome the danger of another Gallipoli. And, without firm guaranties of assistance on this scale the Scandinavian states can hardly be expected to indorse a plan which, at best, would be appallingly costly for them. It must be admitted that the Allies would have real difficulty, at this stage, in diverting really massive forces to the north and are thus hardly in a position to encourage the Finns to continue fighting. Under the circumstances, it is easy to explain the gravitational pull of Berlin on the northern states, and the prospects of a new Nazi diplomatic triumph should not be minimized.

Whittling Away the Wagner Act

AS AN investigating body the Smith committee showed an ineptness that soon made it less effective than it might have been, but there is a new shrewdness apparent in its recommendations for revision of the Wagner Act. Amendments whose meaning have been too well publicized and whose consequences are therefore too well understood have been avoided. No attempt is made to write into the law a section on unfair practices by labor unions, or to forbid coercion "from any source," or to relieve employers from the need for treating with aliens in collective bargaining; the last being aimed, of course, at Harry Bridges. As late as March 1 the *Wall Street Journal*, in a detailed and seemingly authoritative account of the forthcoming Smith committee proposals, reported that the alien provision would be included. Wiser heads seem to have prevailed in the interval. The

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majority report is confined largely to proposals whose effect on enforcement of the law would be no less disastrous because they are of an obscure and technical character. If these amendments could be obtained under a "compromise" by which the committee abandoned its more obvious proposal for a new three-man board, a great advance would have been made toward the transformation of the Wagner Act from a means of helping labor into a means of hamstringing it. This, rather than outright repeal, is now the strategy of the right, as Kenneth Crawford's article in this issue indicates.

One of the most important of these "technical" changes is that which would redefine "employee." Under the Fansteel decision, though not under the law itself, a striker convicted of violence or some other unlawful act growing out of a strike loses his status as an employee and thereby his right to reinstatement. The Smith committee would amend the definition of "employee" to take the right of reinstatement from any employee "who a preponderance of the testimony taken shows has wilfully engaged in violence or unlawful destruction or seizure of property in connection with any current labor dispute or unfair labor practice . . . or in connection with any organizational activities." Now under the Fansteel decision a striker convicted *in a court of law* loses his right to reinstatement. Under this proposal the Labor Board itself would have to determine whether violence or property damage had been committed. It would thus be converted into a kind of national police court, its duties enormously enlarged, its power to reach a decision hopelessly slowed up by the employer's power to bring charges of this kind against any number of strikers. It should also be noted that while the Fansteel decision dealt with strikers, this proposal also applies to rights of employees not on strike who accuse their employer of some unfair labor practice or some interference with organizational activities.

Another "technical" change of the greatest importance is that which would apply ordinary rules of evidence to Labor Board cases. The purpose of these rules is to guide the presentation of material to juries of laymen. Where legal proceedings are carried on without juries, as in courts of equity, far greater latitude is allowed. These rules of evidence have never been applied to proceedings before administrative bodies, where they would serve only to obfuscate and entangle. There are some ninety different exclusionary rules, and every infraction alleged could itself be the subject of an appeal. The potentialities for delay and costly litigation would be immensely increased by this change. Similar in effect is the proposal to apply the "clearly erroneous" rule to appeals from board decisions. This would make it possible to retry every case in the Circuit Court. Further delay is implicit in the proposal to divide the powers of the board with an administrator, the latter to investigate and prosecute, the former to try Labor Act cases. The board would try cases, but its decision, as now, would not be enforceable until the administrator took it into a Circuit Court of Appeals. The administrator would become a key figure. It would rest with him alone rather than with the board whether to investigate or prosecute complaints, and it would rest with him whether to move for enforcement of board orders. A bad administrator could make the Wagner Act a dead letter. The case for division of the board's powers in this way rests on a constitutional bromide about "separation of powers" too complicated to discuss at this point, but the proposal itself derives not from abstract considerations but from the fact that we have a vigorous Labor Board. If we had an able pro-labor administrator we should no doubt hear him denounced as a "dictator," and it would be proposed to cut down his powers and enlarge those of the board. We must note among the "technical" changes, finally, the redefinition of collective bargaining which would no longer require an employer to bargain in good faith and to present counter-proposals to his employees.

The Smith committee's best strategy is to distract attention from these obscure but crucial proposals to debate over the question whether Congress is to "encourage" or "protect" collective bargaining, and whether employers should have the right of "free speech." The latter has great possibilities as a smoke screen, particularly since the Civil Liberties Union has been rushing in where many other liberals fear to tread. We believe that to give an employer the right to discuss questions of unionism with his men is to throw open the door to coercion in fact, even though one provides that the discussion may not be accompanied by threats of discrimination, intimidation, or coercion. No open threats are necessary where the employer, who can hire or fire, talks "abstractly" with the employee about the virtues of this or that union. The tone of voice may be enough, or a raised eyebrow, or a sharp glance. None of them can be taken into court and read into a record.

The Joads' Neighbors

NOT all their neighbors joined the Joads in the trek to California. Even poverty has its aristocracy, and there were some who had no jalopies. Four out of five families edged off the South's land by the tractor crowd into the slums of the nearest city, living as they can between the meager jobs to be obtained at planting and harvest time. A continuous process adds to their ranks. Year by year more farmers become tenants and croppers, more tenants and croppers find themselves pushed down to the bottom status of day laborers. The base of the South's agricultural economy grows broader, the mass of the dispossessed and landless widens, while the number

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of the landowners grows smaller. When a multiplying number of have-nots confront a dwindling number of haves, the wise take warning. We wonder how many members of the Senate's Committee on Agriculture will prove to be in that category.

The plea made to the committee last week by the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union contained specific proposals for amendments to the Soil Conservation Act, successor to the AAA. But the issues involved transcend mere questions of how farm relief shall be administered. The ultimate success or failure of the New Deal farm program in the cotton belt depends upon the answers, and the fate of democracy in the South will be determined by them. For the dispossessed, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union wants a start at subsistence farm homesteads and minimum-wage protection. For the tenants and croppers still hanging on, the union wants safeguards against the grasping planter. It proposes that Farm Security Administration and Federal Housing Administration cooperate in establishing at least one subsistence-homestead project where with government aid families driven off the land may make a new start. It wants crop subsidies refused to planters who pay less than 25 cents a hour; the present wage ranges from 50 cents to $1 a day, and the day from twelve to fourteen hours. For the tenants and croppers it makes two requests, both of them revealing. The first is that benefit checks be mailed direct to the tenant or cropper instead of to the county agent, who is almost always under the thumb of the planter. When a planter gets a tenant's check first, the amount which goes to the tenant usually depends on the planter, and some of the stories told by union officials remind one that the South was the scene of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The other request is that not more than $5,000 be paid in crop benefits to any one individual or corporation. The union, with 40,000 members, prides itself on having recovered $100,000 in crop benefits during the last two years from greedy planters. The figure is in illuminating contrast with the $10,000,000 which our largest "farmer," the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, last year received from the Department of Agriculture. The more money paid to big corporate farmers, who do not need protection, the less there is left for the small farmers and tenants who do.

The New Deal has alleviated the immediate need of the South, but at the expense of intensifying its long-range problems. Increased prices for cotton have encouraged production abroad, which cuts into foreign markets that once absorbed half our crop. Benefit payments have eased distress in one way and increased it in another. They have supplied the planter with cash, and the cash has made possible the purchase of machinery. The more machinery, the fewer hands he needs. If he has a tenant or cropper he must share the benefit payments with him. It is more profitable to push the tenant or cropper off the land, hiring him when needed by the day, and keep the benefit payments. Assurance of certain benefits has encouraged landed interests to increase their holdings—the more land the more benefit payments. The Department of Agriculture prides itself on the democratic nature of its regulatory program, on the elaborate schemes of local election of control committees. But in the South control committees are controlled by the planter, and even though there are no poll taxes or grandfather clauses to make a mockery of these elections, there are other ways to keep the small farmer and cropper, particularly the Negro, from voting. Throughout the South planters dominate the farm program in local administration as they do in the councils of the Democratic Party and in Congress. Unless that control is shaken loose, the South will continue to head for a new irreconcilable conflict. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and its program, regarded in this perspective, is not the dangerously revolutionary force the planters think it, but one of the constructive agencies at work in the South to erect a bridge between haves and have-nots as well as between blacks and whites.

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Labor's New Friends

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, March 11

ORGANIZED labor, with the help of the New Deal, has stood its ground against all comers through the long winter of ownership's discontent. It has had little trouble holding off such enemies within the gates as Big Bill Hutcheson and such enemies without as the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. But the spring thaws have come now, and labor must take on, in addition to its old foes, a formidable force of volunteer friends. These new friends will not be easy to fight, for they are intrenched behind money bags and led by Chairman Howard W. Smith of the House Committee Investigating the National Labor Relations Board, Chairman Glenn Frank of the Republican Program Committee, and Chairman Ernest T. Weir of the Republican Finance Committee.

Ever since the act was slipped through Congress in the confusion of 1935, its destruction has been the primary objective of thinking reactionaries. They realized from the start that strong unions would be harder to get rid of than government reforms when the march back to "normalcy" began. Yet every frontal attack, regardless of the intensity of advance propaganda barrage, failed miserably. With some 8,000,000 workers organized into unions, most of them under the protection of the Wagner Act, few Congressmen were willing to proclaim themselves enemies of labor. A change in tactics was indicated. Came then the new friends of labor.

Smith qualified as nouveau laborite by announcing in a radio address, shortly after starting his investigation of the National Labor Relations Board, that he had undergone a change of heart. He voted against the Wagner Act, to be sure, but he had now decided that labor was entitled to government protection in the exercise of its right to organize without interference and to bargain collectively for improved wages, hours, and working conditions. He assured friends of the law that he was one of them—that some perfecting amendments would have to be adopted but only to fend off destructive attack by the predatory Republicans. He was so persuasive that some of the more gullible of the bona fide labor sympathizers in Congress were taken in. What Smith wanted was a unanimous report from his committee underwriting his amendments. Thanks to hard-headed Abe Murdock of Utah, who persuaded Arthur Healey of Massachusetts to join him in filing a minority report, Smith's scheme fell through.

What he and his majority called perfecting amendments turned out, as anticipated, to be plausible but tricky. Where they came from is anyone's guess. Since John Lewis showed up the old A. F. of L. amendments as products of collaboration between Joseph Padway, Federation counsel, and a group of Wall Street lawyers, no guess as to origin would seem too fantastic. The amendments finally incorporated in the confused and abstruse Smith bill, in so far as they had any correlation, suggested the editorial hand of the committee's labor-badgering counsel, Edmund Toland.

The procedural amendments attracted most attention and were, in all conscience, bad enough. The substantive amendments were more forthright and more dangerous. The so-called Garrison amendment, although it had been tentatively indorsed even by Chairman J. Warren Madden, by forbidding the board to settle jurisdictional disputes over bargaining units would give employers a chance to avoid responsibility by the simple dodge of fomenting jurisdictional disputes between plant majorities and minority craft groups. The amendment limiting back-pay liability to six months would encourage discriminatory discharge of "agitators" and provide employers with another handy coercive weapon. The average case, if not settled in advance of a decision, is before the Labor Board for a year. It may spend another year or two in the courts before it is finally settled. A worker discharged for union activity might be out of work for years before he was reinstated and then get only six months' compensation.

But it was in his definitions that Smith wielded the ax with most telling effect. No employee would be subject to reinstatement if he had "wilfully engaged in violence," for example. Thus if a striker were attacked by a company guard and fought back he would automatically forfeit claim to his job. Then there was the definition of collective bargaining, as nice a joker as ever emerged from a Congressman's sleeve. "The terms 'collective bargaining' and 'bargaining collectively' shall be deemed to include the requirement that an employer or his representatives shall meet and confer with his employees or their representatives, listen to their complaints, discuss differences, and make every effort to compose such differences, but shall not be construed as compelling or coercing either party to reach an agreement or submit counter proposals." This would, in effect, invite employers to talk interminably with union committees, knowing that nothing would be settled.

The strange thing about Smith's bag of tricks was that it contained no fish to throw to the A. F. of L. ex-

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cept the ripper amendment abolishing the present Labor Board. William Green opposed some of Smith's proposals before they came out. Smith made no adequate provision for fostering the A. F. of L.–C. I. O. split or the A. F. of L.–N. A. M. alliance. Right there he may have stubbed his toe. United opposition from rival factions of organized labor probably would prevent enactment of the amendments at this session—if not in the House, then in the Senate or the White House. The President is reported to have told Sam Rayburn that he would veto a destructive bill. He doubtless would go through with this threat if all of labor were behind him.

Assuming, then, that the amendments will not become law before the Presidential election, Smith will shortly be supplanted as commander of the save-labor-from-itself forces by Frank and Weir. The essential fraudulence of the Frank report was nowhere so plain as in the labor section. The whole thing was based on the phony premise that the Wagner Act has increased industrial strife. Frank offered as proof statistics of 1937—a banner year for strikes because employers, acting on advice from the Liberty League's unofficial supreme court, systematically defied the law until the official Supreme Court declared it constitutional that spring. The report generously conceded that the federal government should protect collective bargaining but urged a long list of amendments. Among these was the old N. A. M. favorite preventing "coercion from any source," but with a nice feeling for semantics Frank changed the language to "unfair practices by whomever committed."

Weir changed his spots overnight by subscribing to the Frank report. But it is doubtful whether Weir and Frank will fool anybody. The issue will be fairly clear in the Presidential campaign. The danger is that this, the major issue confronting the electorate, will be submerged by foreign affairs and political oratory.

Men Who Would Be President

II. THOMAS E. DEWEY

BY JOHN RICHMOND

APART from his youth Thomas Edmund Dewey hasn't much more to recommend him for the Presidency of the United States than boundless energy, striking good looks, and a successful record of nine years in public life—three of them spent as the most high-handed District Attorney New York City has ever had.

Aside from his skill and success in sending criminals to prison, virtually nothing is known about Dewey. Up to the time he began his Presidential campaign he never had come out with a platform, a program, or a policy other than "crack down on crime." He had not spoken an illuminating word on taxation, relief, labor boards, social security, or any other important public issue. A scrutiny of thousands of clippings buried in newspaper morgues concerning the thirty-seven-year-old racket buster yields no sign of an underlying philosophy—political, social, or economic. Even on current issues in his own city and state Dewey has consistently refused to commit himself.

At the moment Dewey is acutely aware of the fact that his youth, considered one of his chief assets six months ago, has become one of his greatest handicaps. The war turned it into a factor that must be minimized, in view of the prevailing sentiment that "in these troubled times an old and wise head is needed in the White House." Dewey's publicity handouts try to circumvent this issue by painting a dazzling picture of the multifarious problems and duties that he copes with in a typical day as District Attorney. But these efforts have served only as a spur to cartoonists to lampoon the youthful candidate as "Old Man Dewey" in contrast to "Kid Garner." In what amounts to Dewey's campaign biography, "Attorney for the People," Rupert Hughes compares his subject's youth and ability with that of Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and William Pitt, but no such flight of fancy has yet succeeded in turning to advantage Tom's thirty-seven years. Even though it may bother him, however, Dewey is not above capitalizing on his youth when circumstances permit. Asked for his opinion on capital punishment the day after he was elected District Attorney, Dewey cagily replied, "After all, I'm still young. You can't expect me to solve all the problems of the world."

Dewey's is a neat little success story. He was born on March 24, 1902, in an apartment over a general store in Owosso, Michigan, a town of about 8,000. His family was always in modest financial circumstances, his father's annual income as postmaster never climbing above $1,800. At the age of thirteen young Tom had a dozen boys working under him peddling the periodicals of the Curtis Publishing Company and the Detroit *Daily News*. When the United States entered the first World War, he secured a job on a neighboring farm in need of man-power. He entered the University of Michigan

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at seventeen, and while he did not distinguish himself there as a student, he did take up the cultivation of his voice. His net gains from his college career included a victory in a state singing contest, his B.A., and a music scholarship in Chicago. The vocal career looked promising, and when he completed his course his teachers advised him to go on to New York to continue his singing lessons, which he did. To help pay his way he sang on the side as a baritone in church choirs and, with the aid of phonetically spelled lyrics, in synagogues as well. At the same time he attended Columbia Law School, chiefly because he had enjoyed the year of law he had taken at college.

People who knew Dewey the law student paint a not too flattering portrait of him. He was cocky, self-assertive, strongly inclined to take command of all situations, and brimming over with energy to the point of being annoying. He became more and more absorbed in the law, and when he received his LL.B. in 1925 it was a toss-up between the bar and the concert stage. The issue was decided when despite an infected sore throat he was forced to go through with a previously announced concert. The law won, and Dewey soon secured a job in the law office of Larkin, Rathbone, and Perry, where he worked for fourteen months at the modest salary of $1,800 a year. At the end of that time he shifted to the firm of McNamara and Seymour, where his legal talents were more handsomely rewarded—so handsomely in fact that by 1928 he was able to marry Frances Hutt, once a member of his singing classes, and later in the cast of George White's Scandals.

During his early career at the bar Dewey made his acquaintance with local Republican politics, spending many a spare hour trudging through his election district, punching doorbells, canvassing for votes, and acting as a watcher in polling places. He had to wait only two years to get the break that was to change the course of his life and direct his energies irrevocably into political channels. Assigned to a particularly complex case, Dewey suggested that outside legal talent be called in and recommended George Z. Medalie, a Republican, who had been Assistant Attorney General of New York and who in private practice had defended such distinguished underworld clients as Arnold Rothstein and Legs Diamond. The choice was a ten-strike for Dewey, for in the middle of the trial Medalie was appointed United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York. He had taken to Dewey and urged him to join his staff. So, early in 1931, at the age of twenty-nine, Thomas E. Dewey first took public office, becoming Chief Assistant United States Attorney, with a staff of sixty lawyers working under him. He had never tried a criminal case in his life and few cases of any kind for that matter, but he put on a bold front. He scored several quick victories, chief among them his conviction of the bootlegging beer baron, Waxey Gordon, and in 1933 when Medalie resigned, Dewey was sworn in to take his place, the youngest man ever to hold the office. His career as United States Attorney was brief, flashy, and profitable. In the same year he resigned and hung out his own shingle. The publicity he had won as the dashing young federal attorney enabled him to earn $50,000 in fees in two years.

In 1935 when a grand jury bolted because of the clumsy maneuvers of Tammany's District Attorney, William C. Dodge, Dewey was suggested to Governor Lehman for special prosecutor. After hesitating because of his youth, the Governor appointed him at a salary of $16,695 a year, plus $122,000 for expenses, and gave him orders to smash the ring of racketeers whom Dodge had treated with such obvious tenderness that the newspapers felt called upon to demand his removal. Immediately Dewey selected four assistants—William B. Herlands, Jacob J. Rosenblum, Murray I. Gurfein, and Barent Ten Eyck—all under thirty and all fervent, able, and fearless. They broke up the rackets in poultry, trucking, restaurants, and baking; they cracked down on the loan sharks and the organizers of policy games and prostitution. Dewey normally put in a day of ten to twelve hours besides toiling three or more nights a week, and he demanded a similar spartan regimen from his staff.

As special prosecutor Dewey amassed a brilliant record in the number of convictions he managed to attain, but many of his devices were of a kind to disturb people who are vitally concerned with the preservation of civil liberties. Some violated state law, others brushed aside the canons of professional ethics of the American Bar Association, and many were flagrant abuses of civil rights. Phony grand-jury subpoenas were used to pull in witnesses when the grand jury was not even in session; material witnesses were jailed under high bail and refused their legal fee of $3 a day unless they testified favorably for the prosecution; people were held incomunicado in the name of protective arrest and for no specified crime; defense attorneys were forbidden to speak to witnesses before trial; all manner of rewards were offered for favorable testimony; searches and seizures were made without warrant and material so gathered was freely used as legal evidence.

Whatever his methods, Dewey piled up the greatest record attained by a special prosecutor in New York in twenty years, and his reward came when the united anti-Tammany forces picked him as their candidate for District Attorney in 1937. Before Dewey accepted the nomination he outlined the conditions under which he would consider running. His terms were harsh, but his sponsors listened because they had no better candidate to offer. He insisted that there be no restrictions on the conduct of his office or the development of his unique methods of prosecution. And he tacked on the unusual request that the large sums he received from wealthy

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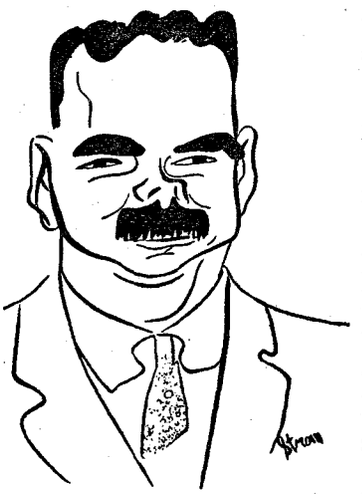
reformers to aid his prosecutions might be used without the necessity of accounting for their expenditure.

When the campaign started, the G. O. P. bosses got a real taste of Dewey's political tactics, and they haven't forgotten them to this day. They outlined for Dewey a perfect campaign for a crusading prosecutor and advised him to discuss the causes of crime in cities, the conditions that breed crime, and also the forces responsible for racketeering. But he had his own boyish ideas and he stubbornly carried them out. His campaign consisted largely of galloping around the city scaring and thrilling people by telling them ten-cent-detective-magazine stories of his experiences with crime and the underworld. Dewey was right and the party hacks were wrong. The public lapped up this new and amusing type of campaign and cheered him to an easy victory. The party leaders were grateful for a victory, but they put Tom Dewey down as a pompous and arrogant whippersnapper.



Thomas E. Dewey

Installed as District Attorney, Dewey continued to operate on the principle that any means are justified by the ends. When he prosecuted Charles (Lucky) Luciano, whom he accused of heading the vice racket, he relied upon the testimony of three prostitutes: Mildred Harris, Cokey Flo Brown, and Nancy Presser, and also on that of Joe Bendix, a lifer at Sing Sing. Mildred was given a letter by one of Dewey's assistants promising her immunity for current misdeeds and "for any other offense"; Nancy Presser was promised a trip to Europe; and on behalf of Cokey Flo and Mildred a deal with *Liberty* magazine was made by the Dewey office after the trial whereby their "life stories" were purchased by that journal at the rate of $2,500 each. Joe Bendix was promised a pardon. In summing up to the jury Dewey vehemently denied promising Nancy Presser a trip to Europe. However, in the appeal motion for a new trial the defense attorney caused something of a sensation by flashing a letter from Nancy Presser addressed from London: "Dear Mother and Dad: I wrote you a letter from the ship. The Dewey office asked me not to talk and I didn't. The office is to pay all our expenses but it turns out to be different once their case was won. They don't care now. We went first class to England. We were their little darlings. But now we are coming back tourist class. That's funny too. They didn't keep their word at all. I didn't think they would." Dewey unhesitatingly admitted that he had, in fact, sent this girl to Europe, but it was merely to keep her from being harmed by gangsters in New York. Bendix, however, fared badly. Dewey was unable to get him the promised pardon and feared to send him back to Sing Sing, lest he get vengeful and tell all. So now Joe languishes in an old, unused city jail, held for further action; he is allowed certain weekly liberties under guard.

In 1938 Tom Dewey ran for Governor in a campaign that still remains a nightmare to the G. O. P. chieftains who drafted him. Again he insisted on the cops-and-robbers technique which he had formerly used so successfully. Again, ignoring all advice, he barnstormed up and down the state telling the people about crime and how he had wiped it out in New York City. He tripped, however, when he tried to tie up Albany beer runners with George Z. Medalie, the man who had given him his first opportunity in public office, and he changed his tack only when Frank Gannett, Republican owner of an influential chain of upstate newspapers, cracked down on him with a caustic warning. Chastened for the moment, Dewey switched to taking pot shots at the New Deal, charging that it "kept millions of workers out of jobs by a spirit of hostility and quarreling toward business." But after a few such speeches he returned to the crime-does-not-pay theme, delivered with lush melodramatic overtones. This brought exciting applause while the anti-New Deal speeches only provoked polite handclappings. The election was close, Dewey losing by 64,394 votes. For all his vaunted appeal he had raised the Republican vote by only 4 per cent over the 1936 election.

Returning to his office of District Attorney, Dewey plunged into his job and obtained the conviction of Jimmy Hines, the grafting Tammany leader, who escaped conviction in his first trial through what is generally regarded as an elementary legal fumble on the part of the District Attorney. The court declared a mistrial when Dewey in cross-examining a witness insisted on referring to an unrelated crime. So certain was Tom that he had committed no error in legal judgment, however, that he stubbornly announced to friends that, given the same opportunity in the second Hines trial, he would follow the same line of questioning. Fortunately for the taxpapers of New York the opportunity did not occur.

"Mr. Dewey," his press representatives will tell you, "never grants personal interviews." He will permit, instead, a fifteen-minute off-the-record chat, with the clear proviso that no quotations either direct or indirect are to be attributed to the Great Man. This is the best that any journalist gets regardless of the size or importance of his publication. After stating the rules of the game to me for the dozenth time, Dewey settled down to the business of my visit. He was cordial and pleasant, and his attractiveness as a figure to present to the public was not lost on

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me. The photographs hardly do Mr. Dewey justice. His high, broad forehead, his sharp, pointed nose, his coal-black neatly trimmed mustache, his quick, darting brown eyes fringed with long lashes, his carefully combed thick, black hair are all handsome features. It was easy to see, moreover, why he had recently been named one of the twenty best-dressed men in America by a national tailors' association. Nevertheless, the total effect, emphasized by his plumpish cheeks, is one of smugness, even foxiness.

After listening to Tom Dewey for fifteen minutes the reason for his silence on so many issues becomes startlingly apparent. It is not, as many people suppose, that he completely lacks knowledge or even opinions on national problems. The truth is that Dewey is definitely conservative-minded and shrewdly prefers that the public does not become fully aware of this. He constantly stresses the viewpoint of business and the seemingly unjust regulations which its spokesmen believe have been imposed upon it by the Roosevelt Administration. I got the unmistakable impression that he felt these regulations must be revoked before the unemployment problem could be solved, for his emphasis was almost wholly on the pre-1929 benefits enjoyed by business. Dewey's convictions favor the industrial rugged individualism of pre-New Deal days, slightly modified of course. Not only would this reversion to fundamental principles bring a revival to business that would revitalize the entire United States, but all other governmental problems would be almost automatically solved if American industries could find themselves thus untrammeled.

To intimates Dewey has stated with certainty that eighteen months after a Republican President gets into office (preferably, by implication, Mr. Dewey) at least half of the unemployed will be back at work. How this miracle is to be achieved he has never explained fully or convincingly. His liberal friends say that he is willing to retain many New Deal measures but add that he feels they must all be amended. He believes they are now much too severe. While he acknowledges the necessity for social legislation, he thinks it should be instituted slowly and without boisterousness. No one has ever heard Dewey express any ideas on foreign policy, but he is believed to be a Henry Stimson interventionist. He believes the farm problem will be solved when the government adopts a more friendly policy toward big business. When unemployment is wiped out, surplus crops will cease to trouble us. Until complete recovery solves the farm problem, however, Dewey favors applying virtually the remedies employed by the present Administration. His eight-point agricultural program differs very little from measures now in operation. But Dewey feels that under his guidance the agricultural program would function more efficiently.

In public Dewey is an ardent budget balancer. He boasted in a recent speech in Massachusetts that the Republican Legislature of New York State reduced Governor Lehman's budget "without impairing a single essential service." The reduction in question cut $10,000,000 from the educational budget by eliminating day classes in English and citizenship for over 8,000 adults, depriving about 15,000 of the same group of evening classes, and wiping out school community centers which had served to keep children off the streets; and it also slashed the food budget in state hospitals to 21 cents per day per person. This may provide a clue to what Tom Dewey considers an essential service. On his recent swing out West he pleaded in Helena for a balanced budget and reduced spending; the next day at Spokane he promised to complete the $394,000,000 Grand Coulee project, Roosevelt's pet undertaking, and even added, "I hope to have a part in advancing the great work you are doing here." He was ill-advised enough, however, to attack public power projects in a part of the country where public power has attained wide popularity. No wonder the Oregon *Labor Press,* state A. F. of L. paper, tagged him with the headline, "The same old Hooey—that's Tom Dewey."

In Nebraska he even was tactless enough to insult party leaders. When he caught State Chairman Kenneth Wherry waving to the crowd from the window of the Dewey car, he stopped him at once, saying, "Let us handle things our own way." Later when A. W. Jefferis, candidate for the Republican nomination for Senator from Nebraska, spoke a few words at one stop, Dewey demanded that he make no more speeches during the rest of the trip. "I won't have anyone else," he said, "using the people who come to hear me."

Among his professional colleagues, Dewey is considered just a fair criminal lawyer. He has achieved a dubious fame for crafty—and infuriating—courtroom tactics. In summing up he almost invariably resorts to a running fire of innuendo. "I can't tell you what this man was doing at that time or in that place . . . of course I know," he will say; and the record is full of such irate protests of defense counsel as "I resent with all the vehemence at my command his dirty, nasty insinuations"; "Mr. Dewey poses like God in this courtroom." Outside the courtroom Dewey has a reputation for having written some of the most comprehensive briefs extant. He is also responsible for the revision by Stanley H. Fuld, one of his assistants, of more than 100 old, redundant legal forms used in criminal indictments.

Dewey possesses a remarkable memory which enables him to sop up information overnight, and this ability is unquestionably a political asset of a high order. No one knows this trait better, perhaps, than the industrial and financial leaders with whom Dewey frequently lunches at the Bankers' Club. He has received and taken many suggestions and much advice from them. At first they

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were inclined to shy away from him as "a housebroken liberal," but as he proved himself more and more receptive and advanced to a proud defense of big business in terms of their own opinions, they gradually became sure that they had nothing to worry about in Tom. Among the more prominent contributors to his gubernatorial campaign fund were J. P. Morgan, Eugene G. Grace, Mrs. David Bruce, daughter of the late Andrew Mellon, Solomon, Simon, Harry, and Murray Guggenheim, E. Frazier Jelke, and F. Trubee Davison.

Dewey's campaign managers, J. Russell Sprague, Republican boss of Nassau County, and Ruth Hanna McCormick Sims, daughter of the late Senator and an old hand in party politics since 1896, try hard to sell their candidate as the most liberal among the Republican hopefuls. The groundwork for Dewey's speeches is prepared by his brain trust, consisting of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Elliot V. Bell, formerly assistant financial editor of the New York *Times,* and Representative Bruce Barton, advertising tycoon, who in 1938, when Dewey was running for Governor, sounded the keynote: "The next national campaign will not be fought between a liberal party and a reactionary party. There is no place in America for a reactionary party. The next national campaign will be between a Republican liberal party and a Democratic radical party." But for all their efforts, Dewey remains a conservative even within the ranks of the Republican Party. The Old Guard split with Kenneth Simpson, New York leader, because of the deals he made with the American Labor Party in 1938. Dewey concurs with the oldsters, including Hoover, and has never patched up his quarrel with the man who told the press: "The people will return to the Republican Party only if they are sure it is not under the domination of Mr. Hoover, the Liberty League, and some of the reactionary forces of the past. If we turn that way, we might as well fold up." That is the kind of statement people expect from Tom Dewey, but there's not much chance that he will make it, either publicly or privately, as long as he travels in the company he keeps at present.

The old wheel horses in Dewey's party realize full well that he is still unripe for Presidential picking, but they know too that he is one of the best fruits in the meager G. O. P. orchard. They know that besides being young he is shockingly inexperienced in national politics and extremely hard to handle. But they also know that they haven't anyone around with one-tenth of his vote-catching glamor. Gallup polls on the subject have shown Dewey's popularity among Republicans rising from 30 per cent in November, 1939, to 56 per cent in February, 1940, with Vandenberg trailing feebly and Taft a tired also-ran. However, there is no indication that the party is prepared to fling the nomination into Dewey's lap by default. While he has been piling up popular acclaim among the voters, his attempts to secure the backing of G. O. P. bosses and their delegates have met with indifferent success. His failure to win the solid backing of the New York State delegation has encouraged other states to hold out on him. Compromise offers of the Vice-Presidency or the job of Attorney General have already been suggested, but Thomas E. Dewey so far has shown no interest. His eye is still on the main chance.

Göring's Prophecy

BY FREDERICK KUH

London, March 1

IF SOME observers are surprised that Field Marshal Hermann Göring, commonly hailed as the great moderate among the Nazi chieftains, favored an accommodation with Bolshevik Russia, I am not. I first met Göring, then a retired captain, parachute salesman, and one of twelve National Socialist Reichstag deputies, in the summer of 1930. We sat on a cafe terrace on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm chatting about the manner in which Baron von Richthofen, Germany's leading aviator in the last war, had met death. The conversation veered to current politics, and grinning broadly, Göring said, "Don't be frightened if I tell you that I'm a National Socialist." I assured him that politicians of his persuasion were familiar to me; I had first attended Hitler's meetings in Munich in 1922 and had acquaintances among the other eleven Nazi deputies. "Do I look scared?" I asked, and he dropped his Big Blond Wolf role.

A few weeks later we again met. This time he lunched alone with me in a Dorotheenstrasse restaurant of his choosing, five minutes walk from the Reichstag, of which he was ultimately to become—president. The waiters clicked heels, bowed, and dusted his chair with a napkin as he entered. In the center of the restaurant was a table laden with hors d'œuvres, lobsters, luscious cuts of cold meat, and other delicacies. But to Göring the restaurant seemed shabby, and he was apologetic. I remember that there were only two men, seated at another table, in the entire dining-room. "I used to come here often during the monarchy," he explained, "and in those days this *was* a restaurant. Now it's dilapidated, *verschlampt.*

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Nobody comes any more. What you see on that table isn't worthy of being called food. Once it was a delight to eat here."

During our meal, which turned out to be an excellent one, he unfolded his major plan for Germany's future: an arrangement between the German and Soviet armies by which they would jointly attack and overrun France; after which, he said, the Reichswehr would polish off its Red ally. This idea, he confided, had been germinating in his mind for many a year. The ultimate pact with Russia, signed more than nine years after that conversation, came as a bombshell to the world, but it fell far short of Göring's bold designs. That is no indication, however, that he had abandoned them.

Göring never lost sight of his objective, although—as I shall point out at the end of this article—his tactics and strategy wavered and changed. It was he and Hjalmar Schacht, endeared to cartoonists by his lofty collar, who made the first significant Nazi overtures to Moscow. The late S. Parker Gilbert, partner of Pierpont Morgan, once remarked to me while he was chairman of the Reparations Commission in Berlin, "Schacht is a master of his craft, but just a shade too crafty, even for a banker." Göring and Schacht were foremost among the Nazi leaders who sporadically approached the Soviet government during the three and one-half years preceding the German-Russian pact, always with a view to an economic agreement, though occasionally with a political innuendo.

A long time is likely to elapse before the Soviet and German Foreign Offices open the relevant archives, but authentic information makes possible, even now, a reconstruction of actual events, as well as of the play of forces which culminated in the signing of the pact on August 23, 1939. Hitherto undisclosed facts, coupled with those we know, and all obtained from responsible, official sources, supply missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. I am here concerned with a chapter of history, mostly unwritten until today, and not with judging merit, demerit, guilt, or innocence. That task had better wait a while, though the reader may form his preliminary opinion.

Moscow's coldness toward Berlin first began to thaw ominously in the six weeks following Hitler's occupation of Prague on March 15, 1939. Vital economic negotiations between the Reich and Russia started in the first half of May after Litvinov's dismissal; in the character of these discussions was implied the Nazi government's hope of a future political understanding. The real political negotiations, according to the best available indications, began in July. And on August 3, as a climax of two days' frenzied consultations in Berlin, Hitler himself decided to conclude the treaty with Moscow.

Concrete evidence casts doubt upon the accuracy of a prominent Soviet diplomat who told me that the Russo-German political negotiations started only when the Anglo-French military mission arrived in Moscow on August 11. Even farther off the mark is the widespread impression in the Allied countries that Russia was conducting secret, parallel political talks with Germany during almost the whole five months of the Anglo-French-Soviet parleys, which opened on March 17 last year. That impression has been strengthened by a misreading as fact of certain rumors chronicled in the official French Yellow Book.

The Yellow Book really tells us little on this subject. Its dispatch from the French Minister at Sofia, Ristelhüber, to Bonnet on December 16, 1938, has of late been mentioned often and quite naively as indicating that the Bulgarian government had received a tip about the Soviet-German pact nine months in advance of its signing. Ristelhüber quotes the Bulgarian Premier, Kiosseivanov, as having said that he did not exclude the possibility of a reconciliation between the U. S. S. R. and the Reich. "Such," Kiosseivanov added, "has always been the dream of part of the German general staff." This remark, citing a fact familiar for eighteen years, suggests that Kiosseivanov lacked any new or startling information and that he was speaking from sheer intuition. Indeed, were he not the distinguished Prime Minister of a sovereign state, one would say that he just had a hunch. I have it on the authority of a high representative of the Bulgarian government, who discussed these questions with Kiosseivanov on July 20, 1939, that even at that late date—about one month before the pact was concluded—Kiosseivanov possessed no information of an imminent German-Russian understanding.

Then there is the Yellow Book's message to Bonnet from the French ambassador at Berlin, Coulondre, dated May 7, 1939, conveying information "from a personality . . . particularly well stationed to know the intentions of the Führer and his principal lieutenants." This French embassy tipster foretold that "the Führer will reach an understanding with Russia." But many persons, including myself, said that after Litvinov was sacked, though they spoke on the basis of deductions which might have proved false and not on the basis of fact. Coulondre's additional quotations from the Führer's confidant scarcely indicate more than that, after Litvinov's resignation, the Nazis' hope of agreement with Russia was rising.

The Yellow Book does not offer a particle of hard evidence of Berlin-Moscow political conversations before the startling announcement of their result. Coulondre's message to Bonnet of June 13 mentioned the possibility of a German agreement with Russia and the destruction of Poland by partition between the Reich and the Soviets, but for such cautious augury did not pretend to adduce anything more tangible than German hopes. Coulondre's June 13 report does not go beyond the negative asser-

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tion that "Ribbentrop has not yet renounced that idea. He will not abandon it until the signing of the Anglo-Russian accord intervenes."

What, then, actually happened?

From the end of 1935 Germany repeatedly offered to open economic negotiations with Russia, showed a readiness to grant Moscow a fresh, big commercial credit and to enlarge trade turnover, and at times even hinted that economic talks, if fruitful, could be followed by political discussions. It was on these and subsequent German fishing expeditions that Göring and Schacht were prominent anglers. At intervals in 1936, 1937, and 1938 attempts to refloat German-Soviet trade were renewed. Those efforts were interrupted for long periods after an especially vehement anti-Soviet outburst by Hitler, an anti-Nazi sortie by Stalin, or similar disturbances. The Reich's annexation of Austria and the Munich conference also interfered. But the crushing of Czechoslovakia gave Berlin a new instrument of pressure. Russia had been receiving big arms deliveries from Czechoslovakia, and after Hitler's promenade to Prague they stopped abruptly.

Evidence is available that on March 19, four days after the occupation of Prague, the Soviet government was still hostile to Germany. On that day Litvinov handed the German embassy in Moscow a tart note, condemning the seizure of Czechoslovakia, refusing to recognize Germany's action, and branding it "arbitrary, violent, and aggressive." The Russian note was couched in stronger terms than the corresponding British and French protests to Berlin. On March 17 Litvinov had proposed to the Chamberlain and Daladier governments a six-power conference in Bucharest, including Poland, Rumania, and Turkey, to consider measures against German aggression. Britain had rejected the idea as inopportune and counterproposed a four-power declaration to resist further German excesses beyond the Reich's frontiers. Moscow remembered, moreover, that after the famous Munich meeting Britain and France had guaranteed survival of Czechoslovakia's remnants, Bohemia and Moravia. On October 4, 1938, burly, red-cheeked Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for Coordination of Defense, had told Parliament that "His Majesty's government feel under moral obligation to Czechoslovakia to treat the guaranty as being now in force. In the event, therefore, of an act of unprovoked aggression against Czechoslovakia, His Majesty's government would certainly feel bound to take all steps in their power to see that the integrity of Czechoslovakia is preserved." As Britain and France—France being committed not only by this guaranty but by its mutual-assistance pact with Czechoslovakia—did nothing when Germany carved up the republic six and one-half months later, Soviet leaders began to scratch their chins.

The first sign of Soviet cooling toward the Allies in the Moscow-London-Paris talks is recorded in the report of the British ambassador, Sir William Seeds, to Lord Halifax on his April 1, 1939, conversation with Litvinov. Litvinov reproached Britain for summarily dropping both the Soviet conference proposal and the British suggestion for a four-power declaration. "The Soviet government has had enough," Litvinov told Seeds, "and will henceforth stand apart, free from any commitments. . . . In any case, we can pursue our own policy; the Soviet government will stand aside—a course which might possibly be in our best interests."

Diplomatic reports from Moscow, reaching a government on amiable terms with Russia, suggest that at the end of April or at the very beginning of May Litvinov's government gave him one more chance to make appreciable headway in his negotiations with London and Paris. On April 16 Litvinov had presented to the British and French ambassadors the first Soviet offer of a tripower pact of mutual aid. The Anglo-French replies had not arrived by May 4; Soviet impatience and doubts had grown; and on that day Litvinov was dismissed. Not until May 27 did Britain and France communicate their agreement in principle to such a pact, and Moscow considered their answer unsatisfactory.

Then something happened in Berlin. The Anglo-French hare had enjoyed, rather grimly enjoyed, a few weeks' start when the German tortoise entered the race for Moscow's favor. Moscow was anxious for renewal of arms deliveries from German-occupied Czechoslovakia. Berlin took the initiative to reopen negotiations on this question; they started early in May and in about ten days led to an agreement for resumption of the suspended armament shipments. Hitler, Göring, Schacht, and other Nazi policy-makers undoubtedly had in mind the gold or foreign currency which these arms sales would bring in. But the Nazi government would probably not have supplied valuable war material to Russia just then had it not hoped that this bait would tempt the Bolsheviks to a political understanding. In the latter half of May the American embassy in Moscow alertly reported to Washington that Russo-German economic negotiations were proceeding very favorably and, if successful, would probably be followed by political negotiations. When Washington received this report, agreement had already been reached for resumption of armament sales to Russia by the German-controlled industries of Bohemia.

Speaking to the Supreme Soviet on May 31 Molotov, then Commissar for Foreign Affairs as well as Prime Minister, gave the Allies a veiled warning, the importance of which they may have underestimated. "We do not refuse to improve our trade relations with Germany," he said, and added that Soviet-German commercial negotiations, recently carried on, were at the moment

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interrupted. "But there are signs that negotiations may be resumed."

In mid-June negotiations for a Soviet political and military alliance with Britain and France were moving at the pace of a crippled snail. Then two diplomats met one afternoon. One of them was a tall, lank, slightly stooping gentleman, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—Lord Halifax, honest, devoutly religious. The other was a short, squat Siberian with high cheekbones and slit eyes that move with darting rapidity, the Soviet ambassador to the Court of St. James's—Ivan Maisky, kindly, cynical, and irreverent. Complete contrasts in mentality and physique, both were men of charm and intelligence. Acting on his government's instructions, Maisky visited the Foreign Office to quicken the sluggish tri-power negotiations. He told Halifax he had reason to believe that if His Lordship were to visit Moscow he would be assured of a very cordial welcome. Halifax replied that he would bear the suggestion in mind. As far as the Soviet government knows, he is still bearing it in mind. Made orally but unmistakably, the invitation was never answered. This not only hurt Moscow's vanity but, probably quite unwarrantably, fanned the flames of suspicion regarding Britain's earnestness in the whole negotiations. Soviet officials say that the absence of any reply to this invitation may well have been the final incentive leading Moscow to open political negotiations with Germany in July.

In July, too, Germany resumed discussions with Moscow for a more extensive and durable contract to replace the May agreement for selling Czechoslovakian munitions to Russia. An accord was reached under which Bohemian armaments and industrial machinery were to be supplied on Russian financial terms, which German business experts considered highly unsatisfactory. In July, however, financial profit had ceased to be the principal German motive. Russia's benevolent neutrality, if not its aid as an ally, was the stake.

Toward the end of the same month, as Germany was accelerating preparations for smashing Poland, Hitler received news which made him gamble more heavily on his Russian card. He learned definitely that he would have to undertake his Polish expedition without active Italian support.

On August 2 the counsellor of the German embassy in Moscow, Gustav Hilger, reached Berlin slightly out of breath. Two days previously Chamberlain had announced in the House of Commons that Britain and France were about to dispatch military missions to Moscow. The race for a treaty with Moscow was now on in earnest. Hilger is reliably known to have hurried home with a now-or-never message and to have told Ribbentrop on the day of his arrival that the clock stood at a split second before twelve. He emphasized that unless Hitler decided at once to conclude the political pact with Russia, Moscow would probably sign the alliance with

INTERMINABLE OVERTURE

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Britain and France. On August 3 Ribbentrop engaged in long consultation with the German military chiefs, and late at night the Führer decided to close the deal with Moscow. Hilger promptly returned to the Soviet capital to settle details.

One week after the event Hilger's mission, its purpose and result, was known to at least one foreign statesman in London. If the members of the British Cabinet did not *know* of the German-Soviet negotiations and of the imminent conclusion of the pact, it is hard to believe that they were completely taken by surprise. I have been told credibly that the gentlemen in Downing Street received many a report about the off-stage whispering between Berlin and Moscow, but that they remained skeptical to the last.

It is in this light that one must view the August 22 visit of Sir William Seeds to Molotov, to whom—on instructions—he expressed "the astonishment of His Majesty's government that the Soviet government should have concluded such an agreement with the German government at a moment when the tripartite negotiations had gone far toward successful conclusion, and that they should have carried on the negotiations with Germany without a single word to His Majesty's government or to the French government, with whom the Soviet government were already in treaty relations." In his bitter interview with Molotov, Seeds described this as an act of bad faith.

Göring has not always clung to the idea he sketched for me on a summer's day in 1930. He has toyed with interchangeable plans. In 1930 he visualized a German-Russian campaign against the Western powers, or at least against France, after which the Nazis would turn on their Bolshevik ally. But in 1935, 1937, and 1938 he strongly hinted to Poland's leaders that he wished an alliance with the Poles against Russia. On his visit to Warsaw in January, 1935, he told the Polish Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Count Jan Szembek, that Poland was the link between the Baltic and the Black Sea and that great opportunities awaited it in the Ukraine. In February, 1937, he told Marshal Rydz-Smigly that Russia, whether monarchist, liberal, or bolshevist, was a menace to both Poland and Germany, and that in this vital respect Polish and German interests dovetailed. In February, 1938, he told Rydz-Smigly that he held a poor opinion of the Red armed forces and that it would not be difficult to defeat the Soviets in war, again stressing the common concern of Germany and Poland to meet the Russian political danger.

Now that he has the Nazi pact of friendship with Russia, will he and Hitler try to transform it into a full-fledged military alliance? And has Göring abandoned that lunch-time dream of war upon the West only as a prelude to a German march on Moscow?

Everybody's Business

By KEITH HUTCHISON

Profits Without Honor

WALL STREET these days is completely listless. For months past—ever since the brief September spasm in fact—price movements have been extremely narrow, and the volume of business has been so contracted that a million-share session has ranked for headlines. If the stock market really reflected the condition of industry, as many Wall Streeters claim that it does, we should expect to find business practically stagnant.

When we turn, however, from stock quotations to corporate accounts we get an entirely different picture. Last year, it appears, saw a really sensational expansion in profits, and the current outlook, in the opinion of many corporate executives, is by no means unfavorable. Although the war boom failed to materialize last fall, the final quarter of 1939 showed a steep rise in industrial production and a much steeper one in earnings; so that even those industries which had been lagging in the earlier part of the year were able to report good results for the whole twelve months.

According to the current bulletin of the National City Bank, the combined net profits of 960 leading companies in 1939, after deduction of taxes and the deficits shown by about one-tenth of the total, amounted to approximately $1,281,000,000, as compared with $647,000,000 in 1938. On the net worth of the group as a whole this represents a return of 8.4 per cent as against one of 4.2 per cent the previous year. The following figures from the *Wall Street Journal* show the results of some of the more important industrial and commercial groups for 1939 and 1938, together with the number of companies included in each classification and the percentage change:

	1939 Earnings	*1938 Earnings*	*Percentage of Increase*
Autos and trucks (6)	$224,424,424	$120,439,882	86.3
Auto parts and equipment (35)	23,257,755	3,719,042	525.3
Building supplies (38)	59,720,745	31,943,244	86.9
Chain and dept. stores (16)	62,988,505	54,712,209	15.1
Chemicals (11)	121,627,460	69,469,644	75.1
Electrical products (17)	78,446,174	46,836,575	67.5
Farm equipment (7)	27,791,301	35,405,136	21.5*
Food products (44)	83,932,468	78,577,029	6.8
Mining and metals (19)	38,246,781	25,884,499	47.7
Steel and iron (36)	137,021,344	8,129,360†	—
Tobacco products (16)	89,147,332	86,270,126	3.3

* Decrease. † Net loss.

Turning from this evidence of capitalist resilience to the Stock Exchange, we note that the Dow-Jones average of industrial stock prices is practically unchanged from a year ago. Or, if we pick out representative dividend-paying stocks, we see that many of them are priced at a far lower ratio to earnings than in March, 1939. Can we avoid the conclusion that today in Wall Street profits are without honor?

Of course it may be argued that last year's results are water under the mill and the market is discounting the future. That is to say, the figures indicate a period of poor business ahead and a falling off in profits for 1940 as a whole. I hesi-

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tate to compete with so impersonal an oracle as the ticker-tape, but it is worth while mentioning that at this time last year market behavior was regarded by many experts as forecasting a business slump. Moreover, if we forget Wall Street and take a broader economic survey, it is hard to find any other facts pointing toward a really serious recession. It is true that in the past two months there has been a falling off in industrial output, and for the first three months of this year the Federal Reserve index of production is expected to average about 110, as compared with an average of 124 in the final quarter of 1939. For the first quarter of 1939, however, the average was only 99, for 1939 as a whole 105.

Reports from the key industries suggest that the recent setback has been most marked in steel, which was operating at nearly 100 per cent of capacity in December and has now dropped back to around 65 per cent. This ratio, it may be noted, is far higher than a year ago and is well above the break-even point. Among other industries the railroads are expected to experience their most profitable first quarter since 1930; automobile output is estimated at the largest for the period since 1929, with earnings substantially better than a year ago; the demand for copper has sharply increased; chemicals are maintaining the high level of activity achieved in late 1939; electric utilities continue to mark up new output records with earnings for January and February estimated at 8 per cent higher than in 1939.

It would seem, therefore, that a fair degree of industrial activity is being maintained despite the fact that there is little visible evidence of new capital investment—the factor on which most economists lay particular stress as a pillar of recovery. Certainly the behavior of the stock market is not such as to encourage investors to put new money into industry, but it is probable that a certain amount of expansion is being financed out of corporate reserve funds. Moreover, although there has been no war boom, there has been a sharp rise in exports during the past three months, and this seems likely to continue. The immediate economic effects of increased sales abroad, unaccompanied by an equivalent advance in imports, is very similar to that of an increase in domestic capital expenditure. That is to say, it makes for a rise in purchasing power, through the payment of additional wages, without immediately adding to the stock of consumable goods. Thus the greater amount of employment offered by the aviation, machine-tool, and other export industries is being translated into a better demand for food, household equipment, automobiles, and so on.

However, Wall Street today cannot arouse itself to consider development of this kind, for it is too engrossed with the political trees to see the economic woods. Robert Laffan, in the *Wall Street Journal*, tells the story of a security salesman who called on a country client recently and heard the usual lament about the country going to the dogs. He then produced figures, such as I quoted earlier, showing the tremendous gain in profits during 1939. Said the client, "I don't believe it." The state of mind illustrated by this anecdote is so widespread as to suggest that if Wall Street really wants to stimulate business it should sack its economists and engage a few good psychiatrists. I cannot help suspecting, however, that the immediate concern in that quarter is political overturn rather than business turnover.

In the Wind

TESTIFYING BEFORE the La Follette committee on the West Coast recently, Joseph di Gorgio, a fruit magnate, described the publicity fund he had raised for the Associated Farmers. He explained why he had boosted the salary of the publicity man employed from $3,000 to $5,000 by saying: "I don't think a man can live on $3,000 a year." The same hearings disclosed that workers on the Earl fruit ranch, a subsidiary of di Gorgio's, had struck because their wages were cut from $3.50 for a nine-hour day to 25 cents an hour.

A CONCERTED DRIVE against liberal textbooks in the schools is under way. Although protests against Harold Rugg's books in particular and other progressive texts in general have appeared "spontaneously" in various communities, they have two main sources. One is the Advertising Federation of America, which says liberal texts "smear" advertising; the other is Merwin K. Hart (and co.). Hart's weekly news letter foreshadowed the campaign weeks ago.

WHILE THE "independent left" which Granville Hicks and others projected last fall has gone into eclipse, Hicks himself is carrying on an extensive correspondence with unaffiliated radicals. He sends out a mimeographed letter at intervals to more than a hundred persons and publishes their comments. One wrote thanking him for conducting a "correspondence column for Marxist lonely hearts."

FACTS IN REVIEW, a Nazi propaganda bulletin, recently quoted the glowing tribute to Nazi troops paid by Sister Bogumila, an American nun who was in Poland during the invasion. "The German soldiers," according to Sister Bogumila, "brought to us the dead and wounded children that they had picked up on the road." The bulletin didn't mention who had killed the children.

THIS ADVERTISEMENT appeared last month in the *Caswell Messenger*, a newspaper published in Yanceyville, North Carolina: "NOTICE—I forbid anyone to hire or harbor Herman Miles, colored, during the year 1939. A. P. Dabbs, Route 1, Yanceyville."

DESPITE NEWSPAPER denials there is authentic basis for reports of a rift between Chief Justice Hughes and Frank Murphy. Hughes feels that Murphy hasn't been taking his work seriously enough, and Murphy, reliable sources insist, isn't too happy as a Supreme Court justice.

". . . FROM HIS train window the American [Sumner Welles] saw huge black signs in letters twenty feet deep on private homes and factories, proclaiming Italy's sympathies, 'Viva Il Duce,' 'Heil Hitler,' and 'Asse Berlino-Roma' [Berlin-Rome axis]. Welles retired immediately to his hotel suite and rested."—A cable from John O'Donnell to the New York *Daily News*.

[Readers are invited to submit material for In the Wind. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Will Hitler Strike at England?

A JOURNALIST of high standing who has just been in Canada writes me that many well-informed men there do not believe that the Germans will undertake a great offensive against England this spring. They argue that it is to the Germans' advantage to wait, since they are not wasting their substance as England is and are steadily getting stronger. Why, they ask, should the Germans any more than the French begin to sacrifice man-power at a ruinous rate? It is, of course, anybody's guess as to what will happen in this war, which in its character is so unprecedented. But from my point of view, based as it is on my trip to Germany in October and November, it is impossible not to believe that the Germans will make a mass attack upon England. That will not involve, as these Canadians seem to think, a tremendous loss of life on the part of the Germans. I believe that the officers with whom I talked in Germany meant what they said when they declared that they had nothing to gain from an attack on the Maginot Line, which, they admitted, would cost them not less than one million lives.

The question is simply this: Will Germany attack England with a huge air force, a great flotilla of submarines, and also with surface ships in March or April, while acting strictly on the defensive on the Rhine? I do not see how Hitler can fail to do this, for since the first of January he, Göring, Goebbels, Hess, and Dr. Ley, the head of the Workers' Front, have all made speeches announcing that England will be smashed this year by the overwhelming might of the German sword. They have proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of their country that the British Empire is to be destroyed. How can they possibly fail to make good their boasts without being tremendously weakened with their own people? Who among the masses of the German people will believe them the next time that they broadcast their views about what is to happen? I know the reply that will be made. It will be said that Hitler has already broken innumerable promises made to the German people, that he promised them peace and led them into war, and that he gets away with these contradictions and false statements.

To this my answer is that Hitler does not get away with it, that the increasing unrest and unhappiness in Germany are largely caused by the increasing recognition that he does not keep his word and that he is totally inconsistent. Every German knows that he is at war, for every German is suffering in consequence in the blacked-out cities of the Reich. He cannot forget the war for a single moment. He cannot enter a store without being aware that there is war, or travel on a train, or listen to the radio without hearing of it. And there is nothing that the average German longs for so much as for peace. Therefore the leaders who have made these distinct and specific promises as to England, notably Dr. Ley, have placed themselves in a position where they simply must make good or admit that they have misinformed and misled their people. Some of the people may not hold the Russian alliance against the regime—though I met no one who would say a good word for it; they may feel that there were hidden reasons that made the alliance necessary; but the specific pledges of Hitler and his four chief lieutenants that England is to be destroyed cannot be talked away. The people will know it if their leaders fail to make good and will realize that they are in for a long war or for defeat. If another winter comes without any dent having been made in England's armor, the stock of the Nazis will take a terrible fall. So I believe what the military men told me in Berlin, that there will be a terrific drive against England this spring when the weather makes it possible.

There is still another reason for this belief, one which the Canadians whom my friend quoted have overlooked. It is the power of the blockade. The British are carrying out their policy of economic encirclement, while the German campaign against British and neutral shipping by submarine and bomber is still far behind the record of 1917. The loss of twenty-five warships, costly in valuable lives as it is, is insignificant in comparison with the total strength of the British navy, plus the 1,700 auxiliary ships which Churchill says have been put in commission. The most startling news of the war has just appeared and, if it is verifiable, has not been played up properly by the American newspapers. It is that Rumania will refuse to supply the gasoline that Germany demands. That means the loss of absolutely essential gasoline supplies. Without the flow of Rumanian oil Hitler's time in which to beat England is severely limited. If the report is true, then more than ever the logic of the situation will drive the Nazi brigands to make one desperate effort to win the war and save their own positions and lives.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Black Native Son

THE Negro in America is confronted by two attitudes. He is treated either as an inferior and an outcast or as the member of an oppressed race who is therefore owed special consideration by "enlightened" whites. These opposite attitudes are in fact the two sides of the same coin of race prejudice, since both deny to the man who happens to be colored his standing as a human being—to be accepted or rejected as such in his relations with other human beings. This is the real tragedy of the black man in America, and this is the basic theme of "Native Son" by Richard Wright (Harper and Brothers, $2.50).

With a boldness entirely justified by the result Mr. Wright has chosen for his "hero," not a sophisticated Negro who at least understands his predicament and can adapt himself to it, but a "bad nigger," a "black ape," who is only dimly aware of his extra-human status and therefore completely at the mercy of the impulses it generates. Bigger Thomas, a twenty-year-old colored boy, lives with his family—a meek, religious mother and sister, and a younger brother who worships him—in a grisly tenement room on the South Side of Chicago. Bigger hangs out at pool halls with a gang of friends who go in for petty robbery and spend their idle hours planning "jobs" and talking about white folks, about cars and airplanes and all the symbols of power in free America which are forever flaunted yet pretty consistently forbidden to 11,000,000 of its "native sons."

In the first part of the book one gets a picture of a dark world inclosed by a living white wall to which the black inhabitants react according to their natures. Bigger's mother and sister are humble; Bigger and his friends are resentful; all feel powerless and afraid of the white world, which exploits, condescends to, and in turn fears the race it has segregated. Against this psychological and social backdrop, which hangs over the reader like an overcast sky, the terrible story of Bigger unrolls. He is removed from the WPA to be given a job as chauffeur and handy man in the establishment of a rich white real-estate operator who owns the tenement in which the Thomas family lives but who has contributed millions to Negro philanthropies. Bigger's first task is to drive Mary, the daughter of the house, to a lecture. Instead she orders him to take her to a rendezvous with her lover, Jan, a Communist, whose views she shares after the romantic fashion of the college revolutionist. In their "proletarian" exuberance Mary and Jan insist that Bigger eat and drink with them. Bigger, who is terrified of "reds" and regards the strange friendliness of Jan and Mary as only another expression of white scorn, sullenly complies. At the end, drunk and confused and frightened, he carries the girl, who cannot walk, to her room; and out of fear, when her blind mother enters, he smothers her to prevent an outcry and his own discovery. From there on the sands run out fast. Faced with the evidence of his unpremeditated murder he burns Mary's body. Then, driven by an inexplicable sense of power and release which his crime has given him, he evolves a stupid scheme for extracting ransom money, forcing his girl Bessie to act as his accomplice. When suspicion falls upon him, he kills Bessie in order to protect himself. After a police hunt during which race feeling rises and innocent Negroes are persecuted for his crime, Bigger is caught and tried while troops guard him from the anger of the mob. A Communist lawyer, Max, takes up his defense but pleads in vain, and Bigger is condemned to death.

The tale is sheer melodrama, but it is no Grand Guignol in black and white. For Mr. Wright has laid bare, with a ruthlessness that spares neither race, the lower depths of the human and social relationship of blacks and whites; and his ruthlessness so clearly springs not from a vindictive desire to shock but from a passionate—and compassionate—concern with a problem obviously lying at the core of his own personal reality that while the reader may recoil he cannot escape from the conviction that this problem is part of his reality as well. It is not pleasant to feel at the end that one is an accessory to the crimes of Bigger Thomas; but that feeling is impressive evidence of the power of Mr. Wright's indictment with its cutting and accurate title of "Native Son."

As narrative the story of Bigger Thomas carries its own dreadful fascination. Bigger's world is made real and terrifying; the theme is developed with such passion and honesty—Mr. Wright plays so directly upon the sense of guilt that is inevitably part of the white American's attitude toward his black fellow-citizens—that the critical faculties tend to be held in abeyance while one reads his book. Only afterward does one take stock of its defects as a work of art. And here, too, it is Mr. Wright who forces one's hand, for he would be the first to scorn indulgence.

The defects have to do with characterization and style. Aside from Bigger, the characters are too lightly sketched. Bigger's friends are real; the girl and her father are not; the Communist lawyer, Max, is only a voice, though a stirring one. In the case of Bigger Mr. Wright has not solved the admittedly difficult problem of projecting in terms of an ignorant and confused, though intelligent, Negro boy the forces that motivate his actions. As a result the author often ascribes to Bigger thoughts of which he is plainly incapable. The situation is saved because Bigger's behavior is authentic and because Mr. Wright's analysis of the roots of that behavior is so patently true.

Mr. Wright's style often reminds one of a stream "riled" by a heavy storm. Its element of Biblical rhetoric is not out of place since it is part of the colloquial heritage of the Negro in America, but there is in addition a bookish quality, often encountered in the self-educated writer, which should be weeded out. Mr. Wright's boldness in choosing to develop his theme through the story of a "bad nigger" is all to the good, but his flair for the melodramatic could bear curbing.

These defects cannot be described as minor, but they are extenuated by the wealth of evidence in "Native Son" that

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they can be overcome by a writer whose talent and seriousness are apparent on every page, who displays a maturity of thought and feeling beside which the eloquence of "The Grapes of Wrath" grows pale. And Mr. Wright's youth demonstrates once more that maturity is not necessarily a matter of years. MARGARET MARSHALL

Watch Over Hellhounds

THE STORM BREAKS. By Frederick Birchall. Viking Press. $3.

ACCORDING to a story current in pre-war Vienna, a newspaper correspondent knocked at the gate of heaven but was refused entrance by St. Peter for having served the truth of Mammon instead of the truth of God. In his despair he turned to hell, but was not admitted there either, since the gatekeeper was afraid his articles would imperil Satan's dictatorship by stirring up the evil spirits. So the errant journalistic soul settled in purgatory, started a newspaper, and—the story went—in a few days was granted a free pass both to heaven and to hell.

Mr. Birchall, not an errant soul, but a very brisk and lively correspondent of the New York *Times,* has had in these last eight years a "front seat" at all the prologues to hell. Moving, as events moved, from one spot to the other, he watched "the Cavalcade of the Thirties" as he captions the burning of the Reichstag, the storming of the workers' houses in Vienna, the Dollfuss murder, the Hitler blood bath, the Czechoslovak tragedy, and the rest, for his job was "to provide not opinions but news." That this job from the newspaper standpoint was brilliantly done needs scarcely to be said.

Mr. Birchall has a keen sense for the picturesque, and his vivid, colorful, dramatic narratives never bore the reader. Out of gratitude for his admirable descriptions we might even overlook such slight slips as his reference to Thomas G. Masaryk as an "American school teacher," though Masaryk was perhaps the only real statesman of post-war Europe whose biography would be worth knowing. In the first chapter "the proud Magyars" fight against Nazi ideology, but in a later chapter "minor beasts of prey, Hungary and Poland are . . . jackals who share the corpse of Czechoslovakia." I don't think jackals are, as a rule, very proud.

From a chapter dedicated to the memory of a "good dictator," we learn how much Pilsudski did for the poor Polish peasants, who "now even had a little money in their banks . . . and were able to eat meat at least once a week"; but at the funeral of the good dictator the same peasants, gathered spontaneously along the two-hundred-mile route of the funeral train, were "poor beyond any estimate of poverty in our richer countries." And now we know, of course, how usefully the Marshal spent the poor peasant taxpayers' money on showy armaments. I am afraid no such thing as a "good dictator" is conceivable, because all dictatorships are bound to be militaristic and if they are large in scope are bound to become an international menace, for they always need an external enemy upon whom to blame their economic troubles. The dictator himself may of course be a man who is abstemious, loves children—even illegitimate ones if there are plenty—and lives up to his own moral standards, as both Mussolini and the Führer unquestionably do. However, since the author is a journalist and does not teach political science, such mistakes are easily condoned.

Mr. Birchall thinks that the events he watched were "the forces that wrecked the peace" of Europe. It was not Hitler who produced Nazism, but Nazism that produced Hitler, and the forces behind Nazism were the hopeless quandary of the middle class, which had failed to make the war a profitable enterprise, the hopeful efforts of the victor powers to back reaction in the defeated countries, and the Bolshevik scare, which made them complacently overlook German rearming while MacDonald's pacifism lulled British public opinion into the mood of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

If the same danger did not threaten after the present war, we should gladly share the author's wishful thoughts that "free people will then have the task of . . . putting together a shattered world"; but what we know of history rather substantiates Mr. Birchall's opposite yet apposite maxim: "Optimism may be incurable, but it should have limits." However, neither the pleasure which the reading of an extremely well-written book gives us nor the author's optimism is limited. He apparently wants to use his journalistic free pass not only to hell but also to heaven. May God grant his heart's desire. RUSTEM VAMBERY

Health for the Millions

THE PATIENT'S DILEMMA. By Hugh Cabot. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.50.

HEALTH IN HANDCUFFS. By John A. Kingsbury. Modern Age Books. 75 cents.

IT MUST be fairly obvious to readers of *The Nation* that the relation between the doctor and the public is at the present time under serious scrutiny; but this is not the only phase of medicine that faces change and reorganization. Hospitals and other public-health facilities have recently been the scene of new and vital undertakings. In the past few years a number of surveys have been published on medical facilities, both local and national. Many of these surveys have been backed, at least temporarily, by large organizations. In addition, Paul de Kruif and James Rorty have dramatized certain phases of our present medical insufficiency. Despite these efforts, however, there has been no general awakening, even in liberal minds, to the immensity of the problem of national health. When the organized forces of conservatism descended on Washington with the avowed purpose of scuttling the Wagner bill, no liberal opposition was encountered.

Seeking an explanation for this general public apathy, I recently asked Stuart Chase for his opinion. His reply was that the urgency of the problem of unemployment seems to overshadow everything else. This view is interesting, as it echoes a remark made by Josephine Roche in 1934, apropos of a certain health project for the underprivileged. Miss Roche expressed the view that it seemed futile to cure these people when they had neither jobs to go to nor the wherewithal to maintain their health. These opinions show how faintly the problems of national health have touched even our most social-minded citizens.

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In "The Patient's Dilemma," an efficient and highly respected doctor explains to the public some of the problems, both medical and financial, that medicine has to meet today. Dr. Cabot's account is thus an inside story. "Health in Handcuffs" is from the pen of a noted investigator and one-time head of the Milbank Memorial Fund's investigation into the costs of medical care. Dr. Kingsbury's many years of fact-collecting in this difficult field were so successful that the A. M. A. found it expedient to have him removed. Granted the premise that national health is an important public issue, both books should be considered in some detail.

After describing many of the separate functions of medicine, Dr. Cabot remarks that the reader no doubt is confused, but this is inevitable, because the subject itself is in a confused state at the present time. That point is not as widely recognized as it should be. Medicine, like everything else, is developing—becoming less and less an art, and more and more a science. It has achieved a fairly good separation from its background of magic, but the change from art to science is of necessity difficult. The A. M. A. would have medicine remain an art, and at times you can even see the robes of priestcraft. The A. M. A.'s doctor, with his all-sufficient black bag, is completely exposed by Dr. Cabot, who cites the necessity of X-ray equipment for both diagnosis and therapy, and the increasing use of quantitative and qualitative chemical tests that require laboratory facilities and trained technicians.

With the advance of medicine both diseases and treatment have become more specific, and honest physicians, feeling unable to cope with the entire field, have specialized in certain branches; but since the patient has to be treated as a whole, groups of these specialists have banded together to do it. This type of medical organization has come to be known as "group practice." The most famous of these groups, of course, has been the Mayo Clinic, of which Dr. Cabot is an outstanding member. He is therefore well qualified to discuss the value and necessity of group practice in its proper perspective. The A. M. A. fought this new unit in medical organization so bitterly that it was finally indicted in Washington in 1938. Dr. Cabot reveals that whereas an immense amount of knowledge is available for the alleviation of suffering and the elevation of national health standards, it is not being used, primarily on account of costs, and secondarily because of a conservative political group that has control of the A. M. A. Dr. Cabot is in favor of a general medical council, federal in nature, to maintain standards and to study new problems as they arise. He thinks medical care should be under state control, with federal aid, but is strongly opposed to state establishment of standards. The present system of independent standards for each state has produced such incongruous results as the following: Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, taking advantage of what is known about the prevention and control of smallpox, had not a single case from 1933 to 1937, inclusive. In these states vaccination is compulsory. Montana, however, without such a law, had 2,467 cases during the same period. Compare the populations and do your own arithmetic. Remember also that there is no law preventing the inhabitants of Montana from engaging in interstate travel.

One of the ways in which the A. M. A. has attempted to chastise its liberal members has been to deprive them of hospital affiliations. Perhaps in so doing the A. M. A. has inadvertently done medicine a good service, by calling public attention to the doctor-hospital relation. It is not generally known that many medical men who have passed their examinations and are practicing do not have access to a hospital where they may treat their more serious cases, even when hospitalization is absolutely necessary. Previous to the A. M. A.'s use of disbarment from hospital practice as a political tool, the reason for disbarment from a hospital was usually incompetence, although there have been other reasons. In cases of incompetence the doctor is forbidden to practice in association with his fellows, yet retains his license to practice on an ignorant public outside the hospital. Federal standardization would take care of both of these abuses. The properly qualified physician would not find himself without a hospital in which to care properly for his patients, and the doctor too poorly trained to practice in affiliation with a hospital would be eliminated from private practice as well.

"Health in Handcuffs" is in the main a summary of the findings of various committees that have worked on the costs of medical care. After firmly basing his position on the need for change in the medical system, Dr. Kingsbury proceeds to carry the war to the A. M. A. It is true that the A. M. A. has today changed its stand on a few issues, but I do not think that the changes have been important enough to weaken any of the accusations or facts presented by Dr. Kingsbury. In fact, the action of the association during the hearings on the Wagner bill shows that it has not changed its stripes in the slightest. The A. M. A. frequently stated that British medical men are completely out of sympathy with the nation's health-insurance system. Dr. C. G. Anderson, medical secretary of the British Medical Association, branded this as a gross misrepresentation:

> Chiefly the A. M. A. and its members who oppose national health insurance allege that it has proved to be a failure and detrimental to the interests of both profession and public. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, most of our physicians are eager for panel service. From the viewpoint of the public, the insurance act has been equally successful, and any attempt to represent it as being otherwise proceeds from a misapprehension of the facts.

A detailed analysis of Senator Wagner's National Health bill is given, followed by a report of the Congressional hearings, at which organized medicine did its best to kill the bill. The connection between the Gannett publications and the A. M. A. is given in factual form, for the reader to draw his own conclusions. Since this bill is not dead, but is to be resubmitted, there is yet time for liberal assistance to be lined up behind it.

Much of the awakening in England to the need of health reforms was brought about by public-spirited scientists, especially those working in the field of nutrition. If we had strong departments of public health in our universities, we might depend on their leadership to carry on the battle here. But our public-health professors have been a queer mixture of medical artist, politician, and faddist, and have been mostly anti-New Deal. If public health in the United States is to be bettered, an aroused public will have to do the job

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itself by supporting such bills as those presented by Senator Wagner, which had the benefit of extensive study by the Public Health Service. In conclusion, let me point out that there is no field where additional labor could be better used than in the various branches of hospital service, both in nursing care and in technical laboratory work. A sizable contingent of the army of the unemployed could be trained and absorbed in this field, with distinct benefit to national health.

HUGH H. DARBY

Augustan World

CAROLINE OF ENGLAND. By Peter Quennell. Viking Press. $3.75.

THE present life of George II's consort follows swiftly (and avengingly) on the heels of R. L. Arkell's dreary "Caroline of Ansbach." Miss Arkell sought to restore Caroline's celebrity, but in vain, for all she did was to turn an obscure queen into a dull one. Mr. Quennell now makes clear—what any reader of Hervey's Memoirs already knew—that Caroline was anything but dull; that she was shrewd, courageous, and worldly; that she played the wife of a strutting and clumsy fool with magnificent good sense; and that she exerted over affairs of state a greater influence than any other queen consort of modern England. Nor has Mr. Quennell merely recreated Caroline: he has lighted up that world, at once brilliant and stodgy, that Caroline inhabited, and introduced those odd, capable, conspiratorial people among whom she moved. His book, subtitled An Augustan Portrait, may claim many of the merits of Augustan writing. It is neither straight history nor straight biography, but a mesh of both; and though it has rather more polish than weight, on its own terms it is a delightful job.

In reviewing Miss Arkell's book a few months back, I ventured to characterize Caroline and to suggest what she suffered in the way of a father-in-law, a husband, and a son. I need therefore not rehearse those matters here, or dilate upon the notorious quarrelsomeness of the early Hanoverians; it is enough to say that Mr. Quennell has hit off Caroline very well and her husband even better. But something should be said of the son they detested, Frederick Prince of Wales, since Mr. Quennell has been at special pains to reinterpret him. On the subject of "Fred, who was alive and is dead" the history books have been extremely harsh and unfavorable; Mr. Quennell plausibly contends that the history books took their cue from Hervey, who loathed Frederick, and that the Prince was less a villain than a weakling. Certainly he was much sinned against by his family, though Mr. Quennell is no better able than anyone else to account in full for Caroline's almost psychopathic abhorrence of her son.

With far more feeling for the period than Miss Arkell, and a far better knowledge of its facts, Mr. Quennell has vividly evoked its social life and sketched in its culture. His scenes of the court are done with style; his pictures of the courtiers, the conspirators, the unattractive German mistresses, the engaging English maids of honor, with gusto and wit. He pushes Pope into the limelight, touches on the Bolingbrokes and Lady Marys, is solicitous for Chesterfield. But the greatest object of his interest—someone who really shares the honors with Caroline herself—is that greatest source of his material, Lord Hervey.

Of all the figures satirized and reviled in an age of satire and vilification, Hervey has assuredly come off the worst. His foppishness and effeminacy were, and still are, a joke; there is an anecdote (which Mr. Quennell does not repeat) of Hervey being asked at dinner if he would have some beef, and replying: "Beef! Faugh, don't you know I never eat beef, nor *horse*, nor any of those things?" A silky and sinuous fellow, he was not unreasonably distrusted and disliked; he had a spiteful tongue and a waspish pen—a pen that has brilliantly if unreliably preserved the court life of his time. He was clever enough to exchange sallies with Pope, and got sufficiently the better of him to win his undying hatred: in the character of Sporus—"that mere white curd of Ass's milk"—Hervey lives on as hero of the most violent piece of abuse ever written by the greatest master of it. But despite his

> Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
> Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust,

Hervey was a man of uncommon intelligence and, despite his womanishness, of remarkable efficiency, and he served during many years as a sort of adjutant to Caroline and Walpole. Mr. Quennell, fascinated by the man and aware that Pope's ferocity was unfair to him, has played him to the hilt and produced a most lively figure.

One might wish that Mr. Quennell had dealt as brilliantly with a far more important figure, the most important figure, indeed, of his time. But to do justice to Robert Walpole, one must study in all their complexity the political movements of the age, which does not suit the scheme of Mr. Quennell's book. His Walpole is accordingly rather the burly Norfolk squire who talked dog-Latin to George I and filth to Caroline than the great Prime Minister whose virtue was to make England prosper and whose sin was to make her love prosperity too well. Mr. Quennell, by keeping things largely on a personal plane, has filled his book with absorbing personalities, some of whom he elucidates in an epigram. What could be neater than that Chesterfield's wordliness "was as earnest as other men's saintliness," or that to George II "adultery was a duty, marriage a pleasure"?

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Shorter Notices

THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $1.50.

The liberal democratic world, declares Mr. Eliot in a book which will commend itself even to hostile readers by the chastity and economy of its style, has no faith which it can set against the demonic faith of the new political religions of blood and soil. In so far as it has a religion, it is the worship of profit; and that is a faith even less acceptable than racism. It is, in fact, so unacceptable that the liberal world practices its worship surreptitiously while outwardly conforming to a "Christian" past. There will be many who will profit from Mr. Eliot's interesting diagnosis of our ills, even if they find his cure irrelevant. His cure is an Anglicized version of the Catholic conception of a society which is prevented from

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worshiping itself, its instrumentalities, mechanisms, and subordinate values, by being officially committed to the worship of God. A group of Christian élite will see to it that the implications of this worship are implemented in social action. Mr. Eliot thinks that the abuses which this kind of official Christianity developed in the Middle Ages can be obviated; but are they not inherent in the system? It is well to remember that, whatever the superficialities of so-called "liberal" culture, it was, on its creative side, a needed and successful protest against the religiously sanctified social injustice of the feudal order. General Franco's Spain reminds us that it is as impossible now as then to give religion political power without corrupting it.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER. By H. G. Wells. Alfred A. Knopf. $1.50.

Quick communication and mechanical power have produced a dislocation between the real nature of the world and the obsolete framework of organization which is rapidly carrying us toward world revolution. The only possible alternative to collapse is socialism—not of the Marxian variety—based on law (the Rights of Man) and knowledge. Though not new, the Wellsian argument appears in fresh perspective, newly implemented by events.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOGIC. By James MacKaye. Dartmouth College Publications. $3.50.

An exceptionally clear analysis of the nature of meaning, the technique of definition, and their relation to the nature of existence. The author simplifies the popular question of semantics by demonstrating its basis in traditional logic.

DRAMA

"The Fifth Column"

"THE FIFTH COLUMN" was written and published in play form by Ernest Hemingway. It was "adapted" by Benjamin Glazer and has now been performed by the Guild at the Alvin Theater. If a consensus of reviewers' opinions is sufficient evidence, it is a fine play and ought to be a great success. In my judgment, however, it is not quite the first nor very likely to become quite the second.

Mr. Hemingway's report on the war in Spain begins well. In fact, the first of the two acts is, in its entirety, tense and absorbing. But the expectations created by that first act are never fulfilled, and despite sincere, perhaps even brilliant acting and staging the very subject matter itself seems to elude the authors, and what had begun as a complex picture of life in a war-torn city ends stagily as the love story of a hard-boiled hero whose grandiose gestures may be authentic but are too familiar and expected to carry very deep conviction. The fault does not seem to lie where one would have been most inclined to expect a fault, for the writing in the first act at least is not only vivid and terse but little marred by that tendency toward exhibitionism which is its author's besetting sin. He does not wear his lack of heart on his sleeve; he is

Hungry Children *Drawing by Kathe Kollwitz*

REMEMBER—THE SPANISH CHILDREN

We have just received the following cable from Eric G. Muggeridge, our executive secretary:

Paris, France.

"MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLISH CHILDREN TO ENTER OUR COLONIES ONE BOY ELEVEN YEARS OLD WALKED FROM WARSAW TO PARIS PLEASE AMERICA ALSO REMEMBER THE SPANISH CHILDREN."

War in Europe has intensified the suffering of the Spanish Children. France has a million additional refugees today. Word comes from our nine children's colonies in and around Biarritz, France, telling us of the pressing need of the Spanish children outside our gates. We have the facilities to care for these children. We need your aid. At the moment only Spanish children may be "adopted"—but funds are needed immediately to rent new houses and furnish them for the Polish children.

Your "adoption" today means the taking of a child out of a Concentration center. The child is placed in our children's colonies immediately. Perhaps, if you cannot "adopt" a child by yourself, you might ask a group of friends to join in the "adoption." An "adoption" costs $9.00 per month.

You will receive a photograph of your Foster Child along with its history. You will also receive personal letters and drawings from the child. You will, of course, want to correspond with your Foster Child.

If you cannot afford to "adopt" a child, your contribution, no matter how small, to help these children will be truly helpful and appreciated.

Our funds are cabled directly to our colonies in Biarritz, through the Chase National Bank. Safe arrival is guaranteed. The doors of our colonies are open to all children.

EDNA BLUE, Executive-Chairman.

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not, to revive the familiar taunt, too overwhelmingly aware of the hair on his chest. But he does abandon a complex and difficult subject for one that is relatively easy and already stereotyped, with the result that the spectator finds his interest declining step by step after the mid-point of the play has been reached and as the themes which had been brilliantly suggested in the first half of the piece recede farther and farther into the background.

These themes are all concerned in one way or another with the difficulty of reconciling the aims of a holy war with the methods which it must inevitably use, and with the contrast inevitably apparent between the cause for which one is fighting and the individuals in whose name the cause is fought for. It is not merely that the hero, a young American correspondent who has been drawn by his sympathy for the Loyalist government into the dangerous business of counter-espionage, cannot fail to realize that the drunken electrician of the hotel in which he lives is no very inspiring specimen of that proletariat for which he is endangering his life; it is also that his superior, the officer in charge of espionage, has been completely dehumanized by the process of fighting for humanity, and that the ruthlessness which he himself believes to be necessary remains nevertheless debasing when it is translated into a concrete instance—when, for instance, he has to bully a frightened boy wrongly suspected of treachery or shoot a fat German general in the back when the latter, a captive, will not walk fast enough. But these themes, brilliantly suggested, are never fully treated, and they are, I think, left undeveloped, not because they are not what the author is really interested in, but because it is plainly so much easier to develop instead the easily managed story of the hero's love affair with an American girl and his final decision not to follow her out of Spain to safety. Probably both original author and adapter are familiar with the fact that puzzled critics of the drama often fall back upon the statement that a play under discussion "doesn't come to a focus." The trouble with "The Fifth Column" is that it does—at the wrong place. In the opening scenes several themes are in solution, and it is the least interesting of all that crystallizes.

In the past, when Mr. Hemingway has been beset with doubts he has sometimes seemed to imply that the sensible thing for any modern man faced with a difficult problem to do is just to forget all about it and go out and kill someone, or failing that, some animal—even if it is only a lion in Africa or a skilfully tortured bull in an arena. In the present instance there is little suggestion of that attitude, and he ends instead with a careful debate in which the girl who argues that Americans should leave dying Europe to wallow in its own blood is answered by a German refugee who explains that fascism cannot be fought with any chance of success except upon its own frontier. But the difficulty with this last conclusion is simply that by the time one has got around to it in the last few minutes of the performance the whole play has become so artificial that the argument has ceased to seem very real and has become merely the inevitable end of a play.

Franchot Tone plays the hero with great sincerity; Lee Cobb, the German equally well. Katherine Locke is also excellent in the faintly drawn role of the girl, and Lenore Ulric does what is required as the inevitable child of nature turned prostitute.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

"THE FIGHT FOR LIFE" (United States Film Service Production) is for many reasons the most exciting picture I have seen since I began conducting this column. Its theme, childbirth in the slums of our great cities, seems at first unsuitable for movie treatment because the industry, in imposing limits on its own work, has curtailed as well our expectations. Two pictures, "The Grapes of Wrath" and "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet," have recently broken down these limits to a certain extent. "The Fight for Life" offers a new and even more striking example of how effective a medium the screen may become once the purely commercial principle of "nothing but entertainment" is left behind.

Pare Lorentz, director of the United States Film Service, whose film "The River" set a high standard for the American documentary, wrote, directed, and produced "The Fight for Life," taking the material from one chapter of Paul de Kruif's book of the same name. By combining elements of film drama with straight camera reporting he has created a new genre which is inadequately called semi-documentary. There are actors and non-actors—"doctors, students, nurses, women of the city." There are staged scenes and unstaged ones. But one is never aware of the difference, and one has to look at the program to distinguish the "women of the city" from the actresses who impersonate some of them. Here is a genuine documentary minus the dead moments of straight reporting—the best non-fiction picture yet produced.

After a childbirth which is fatal to the mother, a young interne (played by Myron McCormick, who is excellent in his earnest, taciturn simplicity) joins the staff of a maternity center in Chicago. Here pregnant women receive advice and medical care, and from this center doctors and nurses rush by day and by night into the slums to deliver babies and to fight against the principal causes of death in childbirth—uncleanliness, malnutrition, ignorance. We learn with the young interne the exciting business of bringing children into the world; and the picture gives in an unobtrusive way a tremendous amount of information which no future father and no expectant mother can afford to ignore. It protests powerfully, by simply showing the truth and without once descending to the propaganda level, against shameful conditions, and at the same time celebrates the men who fight them.

Technically the picture is excellent. Hollywood could not have done a better job. Artistically it is full of unforgettable moments. Notice, for example, the dramatic use of the black-gloved fingers of the doctor counting the heartbeats of the unborn child. Dorothy Adams as the young mother and Dorothy Urban as the grandmother in the terrific scene in which a mother is saved by means of a blood transfusion give performances of unsurpassed power. Again, as with "The River," the United States Film Service and Pare Lorentz have made film history.

I am sorry not to be able to call "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" (RKO) a great picture, though it bears evidence of the efforts which have been made to produce a film worthy of the theme. Robert E. Sherwood himself adapted his success-

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ful stage play for the screen, but many values of the play have been lost in the process and nothing essential has been added. Too much space is given to background scenes which should have been lightly sketched in, and likewise Lincoln's inner life and development have been neglected. Raymond Massey is convincing as the mature Lincoln in the latter part of the picture, but from the first moment he seems too conscious of his future important role as President of the United States. The direction is straight and unimaginative. There are many good and interesting scenes, and the picture is worth seeing, though it only makes one realize that the real picture about Abraham Lincoln has not yet been done.

The French picture "The Baker's Wife," based on an incident in a novel by Jean Giono, directed and produced by Marcel Pagnol and featuring the great actor Raimu, is a most humane, entertaining, and delightfully frivolous comedy. Its witty dialogue is often untranslatable, but John Erskine's English titles will enable anybody to enjoy what is in many respects the best film of its kind to come across the Atlantic.

FRANZ HOELLERING

RECORDS

TOSCANINI'S new set of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (M-640, $8) offers one of the greatest performances ever put on records, for which posterity will thank Victor. But I doubt that it will thank Victor and N. B. C. for the hard, wooden sound which the performance has on these records because of the unfavorable conditions under which the recording was done.

For several years we have heard about a recording of the second-act duet of "Tristan und Isolde" by Flagstad and Melchior; and some of us have hoped that the gala occasion would be used to give us on records what we never hear at the Metropolitan—the entire duet without cuts. On five records we could have had it; but of the actual five records of the Victor set (M-644, $10) two are devoted to Brünnhilde's Immolation from "Götterdämmerung" and one to the *Liebestod* from "Tristan," leaving two which give us the second-act duet only from "O sink hernieder," and this with the Metropolitan's cut between Brangäne's two warnings; and whereas the first time the warning is sung by an unnamed singer, the second time, when Brangäne's voice should interrupt the duet, only her orchestral accompaniment is recorded (which leads me to suspect that the unnamed singer, who is heard only faintly the first time, is Flagstad herself). This is bad enough; and in addition, instead of a balanced recording in which the orchestra is heard as clearly as the voices, there is the effect of microphones close to the singers —the effect, that is, of an orchestra subordinated and obscured. And the reason is simply that this is not primarily a recording of Wagner's music but primarily a recording of Flagstad's and, to a lesser degree, Melchior's voice.

The improvement in recording in the five years since Flagstad's first record of the *Liebestod* is evident in her new one. One hears it in the greater distinctness and sharpness of the *s's* and *t's* in "Seht ihr's nicht," and in the similar

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distinctness and sharpness in the reproduction of the voice, which make it amazingly and confusingly lifelike—confusingly, since hearing the more lifelike reproduction one may think one is hearing the more beautiful voice; whereas in fact the voice that is so lifelike on the new record is one which has lost the soaring opulence in its upper range that is reproduced with less distinctness and sharpness on the older record. In this range it is worn thin, with a strong tremolo; but the lower range is still sumptuous. The same confusing improvement in recording and a worse deterioration in the voice itself are to be heard in Melchior's singing on the new records of the second-act duet when they are compared with the corresponding record he made with Leider years ago. In the duet Flagstad's voice sounds as it does in the *Liebestod;* but on the two records of the Immolation Scene her upper range is rounder and steadier, and if her singing here is not all that I can recall in the past it is still quite wonderful. The fact is that even with its losses the voice retains enough of its extraordinary quality to make the records treasurable—and this not only to a person interested in the voice but even, despite the cuts and other defects, to a person interested in the music. But no less treasurable are the earlier records of the music with Leider, Austral, and the younger Flagstad; and I hope these will remain available.

There have been, all along, persons who have insisted on the distinction between the mere beauty of Flagstad's voice and the musical and dramatic art of singers like Lilli Lehmann, Ternina, Fremstad—to say nothing of Frida Leider and Lotte Lehmann. To demonstrate this distinction one of the readers of this column has had the International Record Collectors' Club (318 Reservoir Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut) send me its re-recording of Fremstad's 1911 record of the *Liebestod,* with Verdi's "O Don Fatale" on the reverse side (No. 158, $2.25). From this re-recording the scratch and noise emerge very strong, the voice rather weak, the wheezy orchestra so weak as to leave the vocal line almost without the orchestral context that gives it continuity and, at times, sense; and while I hear evidence of a voice that was clear and strong, and phrasing that imparts continuity to the vocal line, I do not hear the subtleties of coloring which constituted the art of Fremstad, and which even this re-recording may recall to those who heard her sing in 1911. One gets a better notion of her impressive style in "O Don Fatale."

More successful is the re-recording (No. 5004, $1.75) of Muratore's 1916 record of "Elle est à moi" from "Monna Vanna" (awful music), on which his superb voice and style as I recall them are re-created in sufficient degree, I think, to be appreciable even to someone who did not hear him; but the reverse side, with an excerpt from Messager's "Fortunio," is very poor. And best are the original 1906 Eames-De Gogorza recordings (No. 20, $2.25) of "Là ci darem la mano" from "Don Giovanni" and "Crudel! perchè finora" from "Figaro"; but the voices sound different on the two sides, which were made a month apart in different studios. De Gogorza's, especially, has a brightness and color in the "Figaro" duet that it does not have in the other, and the finish and style of his singing are more impressive. Eames's voice is clear and agreeable, but no more than that, and her musical taste is not impeccable.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Curbing Japan

Dear Sirs: The editorial on our relations with Japan which appeared in your issue of February 10 puts quite fairly the case for positive action against Japan. Your statement as to the extreme improbability of war with Japan resulting from firmness on our part seems to me sound. As you say, it is not possible to state that war cannot happen, if we, for example, impose an embargo on the export of war materials to Japan. It is also impossible to say that war will not come if we encourage the Japanese army to believe that we will stand for anything and consequently encourage it to proceed to extremes which might inflame even our peace-loving people.

From what I have learned here I am not disposed to fear that our government will make any agreement that will impair our rights in China or compromise the Chinese government, but I share your fear that complete inaction on its part may be the policy for a time, and that this will do harm to our interests.

You are quite right in believing that the Japanese government cannot depend upon its army to carry out any agreement that the Tokyo Cabinet may make with the United States or other foreign powers. Even the army in the field is not a unit controlled by one head, and the picture is further complicated by the corruption which seems to have spread through all ranks of the invading army. ROGER S. GREENE

Washington, March 5

Nazi "Law"

Dear Sirs: Why the Nazi government regards the Altmark incident as a British breach of international law is hard for me to understand. According to Dr. Franz von Liszt, formerly professor at the University of Berlin and a leading German authority on international law, the liberation of the British seamen even in neutral waters was justified. Von Liszt has pointed out that the recognized conceptions of self-defense and self-help exclude the illegality of such an act.

Aside from that, the present German regime is not usually very particular to respect foreign territorial sovereignty. In 1935 Himmler, the chief of the German police, ordered his men to arrest illegally the journalist Berthold Jacob on Swiss soil and take him to Germany. At about the same time two German police officials penetrated illegally into Czechoslovakia to destroy a secret broadcasting station. On this occasion the broadcaster, Rudolf Formis, was shot down by the two German police officers. Himmler has even boasted of the latter act in an official publication. In September, 1939, Himmler ordered that the British secret agents Best and Stevens be arrested on Dutch soil near Venlo by Gestapo officers and brought to Germany, where they are imprisoned. These are only a few cases among many.

R. M. W. KEMPNER,
Formerly First Legal Adviser in the Ministry of the Interior, Police Department, Berlin

Philadelphia, March 8

Questions for Mr. Corey

Dear Sirs: In his series of articles in recent issues of *The Nation* Mr. Corey criticizes the orthodox Marxist view of the rigidly defined class struggle and sees the origin of failures of the socialist movement—particularly in the Third International—in the exclusively proletarian base necessitated by this orthodox view. Emphasis on bitter class struggle —"all who are not with us are against us"—has thrown the middle classes in with the fascists, he says, and checked socialism in those countries most prepared for it. Nor does Mr. Corey hesitate to maintain, with some gymnastic logic, that this basing of the revolution on the working class alone, with the consequent alienation of the middle class, has led to a dictatorship of a middle-class bureaucracy.

I wonder if history doesn't permit a somewhat less confusing explanation. Recall Lenin's debate with the economists who wanted to have a democratic party of working-class people. Lenin's solution in "What Is to Be Done?" was an autocratic party of revolutionists of no particular class origin—middle class, clergy, or even members of the court, it didn't much matter so long as they were discontented and determined. I would suggest that Arthur Rosenberg's view of Bolshevism as a device whereby the educated middle class uses the workers to fight their revolutionary battle may be correct. Certainly the Communist Party, with its allies, presents no solid proletarian front even today. I think it significant that certain middle class groups are present in its ranks far beyond their proportions in the total population.

Mr. Corey's picture of his gradualistic Utopia is very pretty indeed, but it too raises some questions. He visualizes a central core of government-owned credit and big industries with a periphery of smaller private concerns. I wonder how long this equilibrium could last or how desirable it might be that it should. Small business seems to subsist in our monopoly economy mainly because of its cruder exploitation of cheap labor. A socialistic government would probably raise wage standards beyond what these small industries could pay and still be profitable.

Without a doubt private business will do its best—constitutional or otherwise —to hamper the transition to Utopia. Mr. Corey doesn't say what we are to do when reaction ("counter-revolution") comes out in the open using all the forces at its disposal. Yet that is probably the most crucial problem of the transition. Whatever tyrannies have arisen from the application of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the Marxists have at least tried to solve this problem. I wish Mr. Corey would.

JOHN B. MARKS

Chicago, March 4

Italy Waives the Rules

Dear Sirs: The conduct of the Italian steamship lines since the war began deserves critical attention. In normal times the Italian lines were predominantly used by Italians, but all that changed after September. Now the flag of Savoy seems to rule the Atlantic, at least in respect to passenger business. The Italians are exploiting the opportunity to the limit, and their victims are helpless refugees.

Up to last December some 20,000 refugees came to the United States on Italian boats; the same ships are looking forward to transporting 50,000 more in the future. Italy's anti-Jewish laws have not inhibited the Italian lines from pro-

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viding passage for the Jews—at exorbitant rates. After September 1 all lines of the Atlantic pool raised their rates from 30 to 50 per cent, because of the increased insurance costs and higher wages of sailors in war time. When I last investigated, the Italian line alone had not raised crew wages. Yet their rates have been steadily rising. Before November they charged passengers $170 for a third-class ticket when the United States Lines were charging only $130. Since November the Italians have introduced the deceptive fiction of "all third class"; in return for giving passengers the "run of the boat" they charge $200 to $220 for third-class berths. To financially hard-pressed refugees this is small compensation for the increased price. It is true that the United States Lines have now also raised their rates to a comparable figure, but a host of other profiteering devices remain unique with Italian ships.

A young refugee girl from Berlin took a boat from Trieste. She had made a reservation in advance, but when she came on board she was told the room was taken. The head steward then demanded—and got—fifty lire for obtaining an identical room for her. Her case, I am reliably informed, is not unusual. Refugees naturally carry a great deal of baggage. Two hundred pounds of clothes and linen are transported free, but other material is classified as "merchandise" and must be paid for at $2 a pound—lire are not accepted. And if a single piece of "merchandise" exceeds a certain limit in weight, it is measured in cubic volume, and the charge is $10 for each cubic meter. All these petty forms of legal extortion are cruel enough. But worst of all is the contemptuous and abusive language of the ship officials toward the refugees. I have heard numberless examples of the small ways in which life for the Jewish passengers is made unbearable by scornful officials.

No Italian booking office in Central Europe is supposed to reveal the detailed financial burden of the journey in advance, and especially not to refugees. I am told that a few officials are so ashamed of the extortion practiced on the ships that they have on occasion paid the fees themselves. Almost the whole refugee traffic is financed by American relatives of refugees or by refugee agencies. To that extent Americans have a very concrete reason for striving to halt this cruel—if legal—piracy. A. P.

New York, March 7

"We Who Are About to Die"

Dear Sirs: In 1914 it was "Huns" and "Boches" and "Hang the Kaiser." Today it's "Hitler, Beast of Berlin." The truth is, the same ones who ran the last war and cleaned up on it are doing business at the old stand. They hand out the same pap about "a struggle between two totally incompatible ideas of man's destiny." Imperialist rivalries? God forbid! says *The Nation*—only the shadow, not the substance.

We who are about to die say, "Rot!" And we have the colonial slaves of the British, French, Italian, and American empires to prove it. We have the domestic slaves in Germany and Japan to prove it.

You don't want American participation in a physical sense? Of course you don't. But reread the files of a journal called *The Nation* and learn how you are helping with your present editorials to prepare the ground for it. Reread those columns that say "Never again." I've been brought up on them; you can't sell me any Chamberlain-Daladier-Blum-Roosevelt-Hoover-*Nation* axis.

S. L. J.

Mt. Vernon, N. Y., March 6

Never a Socialist

Dear Sirs: In your issue of December 9, 1939, in a review signed by James Rorty, he lists me along with others as a Socialist. Never at any time in my life was I a member of the Socialist Party, and I cannot imagine where Rorty obtained any authority for the statement.

GEORGE CREEL

San Francisco, February 27

A Long Association

Dear Sirs: May I congratulate *The Nation* upon its seventy-fifth anniversary and upon the very significant issue which marks the event.

In my childhood I knew of the weekly arrival of *The Nation,* and heard my father's often-expressed admiration of E. L. Godkin. Earlier still, before my arrival upon the scene, *The Nation* published letters written by my father, Richard Dewey, M. D., from Germany, where from September, 1870, to April, 1871, he served as volunteer surgeon in the Franco-Prussian War.

I feel therefore a reflected pride of association with *The Nation;* I have also an appreciation of it entirely my own. In the years since 1914 this truly liberal journal has provided fearless comment and democratic outlook on the chaotic events of our time. Like another of your congratulators, I am "uncomfortable until I find time to give *The Nation* a careful reading."

ETHEL L. DEWEY

Chicago, February 20

Llewelyn Powys's Letters

Dear Sirs: Alyse Gregory, widow of Llewelyn Powys, is collecting his letters for publication. She would appreciate it if anyone having letters from him would send them to me for forwarding to her in England. All originals will be promptly copied and returned. They may be addressed to me at 519 West 121st Street. AGNES A. DE LIMA

New York, February 23

Bibliography of a War

Dear Sirs: I am preparing a comprehensive bibliography on the Spanish civil war which will list all books, pamphlets, and magazine articles dealing with the war. Prose, poetry, and fiction will be included. I shall be happy to acknowledge any assistance your readers may offer. Address me at 5989 St. Urbain Street. SAMUEL H. BROWN

Montreal, March 8

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INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

THE NATION, 55 Fifth Ave., New York. Price, 15 cents a copy. By subscription—Domestic: One year $5; Two years $8; Three years $11. Additional Postage per year: Foreign, $1; Canadian, 50 cents. The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Dramatic Index, Index to Labor Periodicals, Public Affairs Information Service. Two weeks' notice and the old address as well as the new are required for change of address.

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